Ya' Had to Be There!

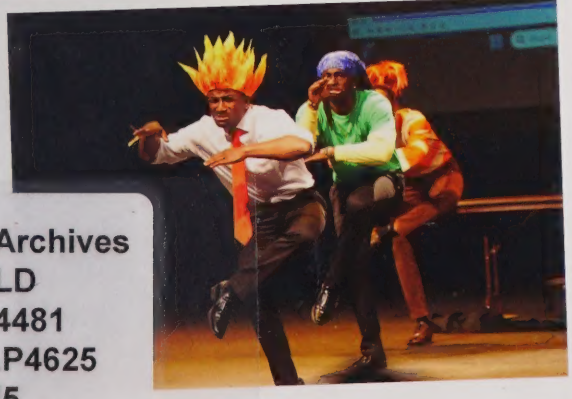
Homecoming Parade

Study Abroad - France

Aux Cord Wars

Football G

Pembroke Day



Step Show

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Indianhead 2025

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Ya' Had to Be There!

Indianhead 2025

Vol. 80

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke
1 University Drive
Pembroke, NC 28372-1510
www.uncp.edu

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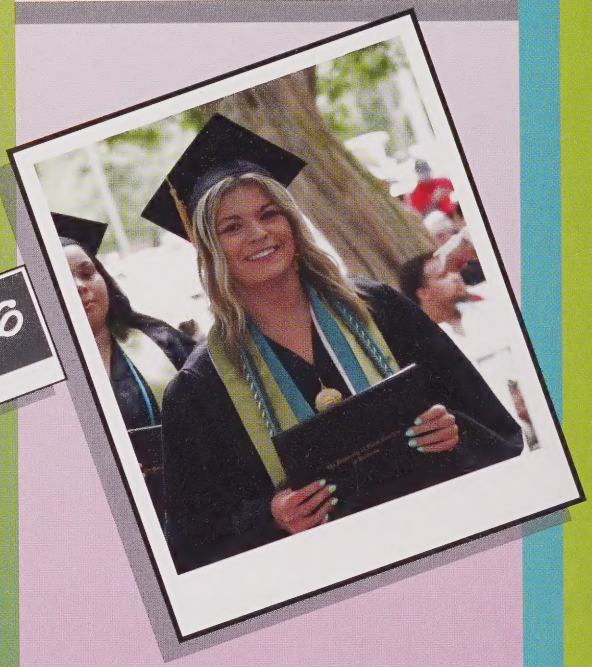

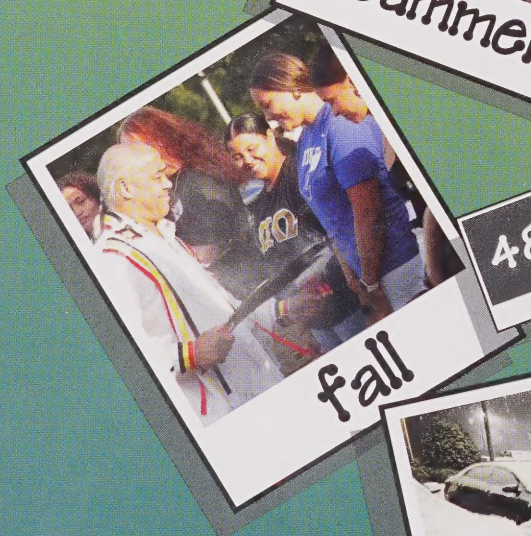
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Throughout our college lives there were events and opportunities missed that we may have wanted to attend. For the theme of this yearbook we surveyed the student body to figure out how you wanted us to frame your experiences. In the end the winning theme was "Ya' Had to Be There." The yearbook staff made their best effort to capture the moments on campus that felt unforgettable. As you flip through the pages you'll see that we were heavily influenced by the resurgent popularity of Polaroids, known for their candid shots and instant results. You'll see this reflected in our color choices and other design elements influenced by the Polaroid brand.

Pembroke has gone through many changes, on campus and throughout the town. Some new fast food additions to the town are Zaxby's, Popeyes and a Starbucks off-campus. Some of the roads also got an upgrade just before the school year started, and some roads downtown are still being worked on to this day. Stepping on to campus you'll see parking lots being paved, softball and baseball facilities upgraded, new additions to the Chavis Student Center and Hawk's Nest, pool renovations for the Jones Center, pickleball courts, and an improved intramural sports field.

Over the summer the UNC System eliminated jobs and budget allocations related to "diversity, equity and inclusion." At UNCP that meant the closing of the Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity, with the people in those staff positions being moved to jobs in other departments.

This year saw its share of political uproar. During the presidential campaigning process, incumbent Joe Biden decided to drop out of the race to let Vice President Kamala Harris take over, and Donald Trump lived through an assassination attempt. We saw a spike of political interest among UNCP students, including the founding of a new student organization called Braves4Dems and students of all political stripes volunteering their time to get others registered to vote. The voting process ended with the election of Donald Trump, who stepped back into office on Jan. 20 for another four years.

At the end of this book you'll see our spread dedicated to Cameron Taylor, a brother of the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity. As last year's volume of the Indianhead went to press, SGA held a memorial for Cameron, who was killed in a shooting at The Commons apartment complex. He was and will always be a Brave to remember.

Thus, as you go through this volume, you'll see times of highs, lows, smiles, tears and times we stood in unity. Even through the struggles of this life, we should always remain in community together. We need to band together to fight through every trial and push each other to succeed. As it has been pointed out, people are defined by the communities they belong to, and we are BraveNation!

--Hannah Scrattish, Editor-in-Chief

Indianhead

Hannah Scrattish

Ben Rodgers

Kia Wynne

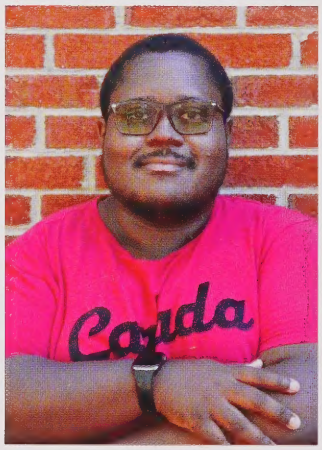
Zack Ciboth

Jalayna Pough

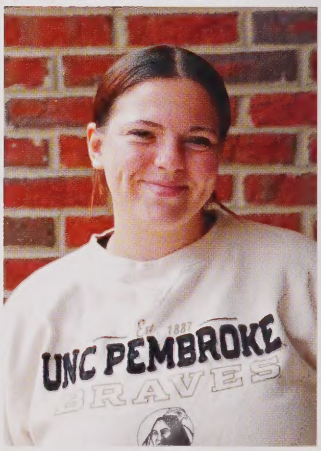
Evan Phillips

Tarah Reaves

Isaac Nixon



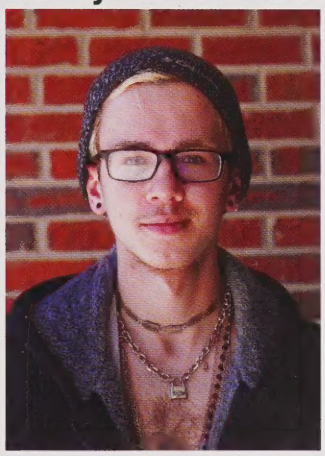
Heidi Burch



Yearbook Staff

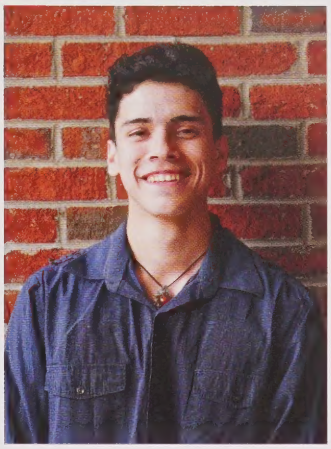
Leah Anderson

Corey Vanderroest



Genesis Benavides

Jose Peralta



Aniya Lewis

Taylor Matthews

Vaughn Brown

Alyssa Branch

Leah Smith

Gemmaury Edison

Camille McDougald

Itai White

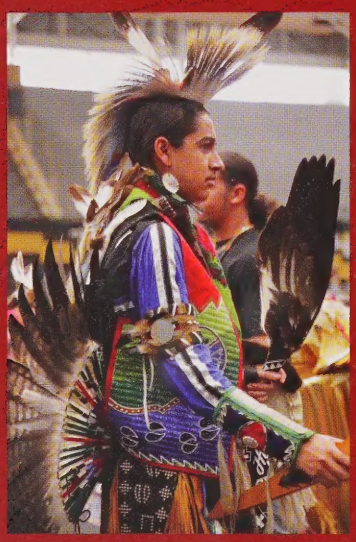
2024

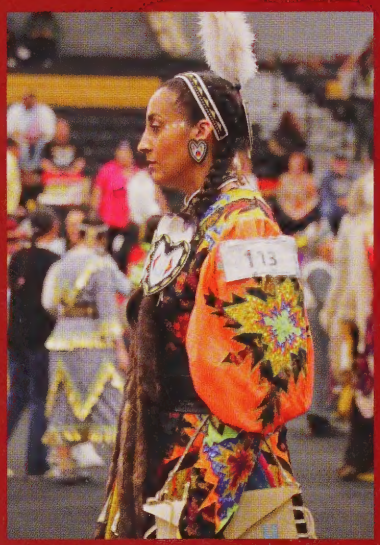
SPRING

Spring arrives like a long-awaited symphony, composed of tender notes and harmonious chords that awaken the senses and stir the soul. After the quiet slumber of winter, spring carefully unfurls its delicate beauty with subtle grace, a reminder that the world is capable of renewal. As daylight increases and leaves on the trees start to sprout, the campus seems to come alive, with students spending more time outside. Now students enjoy the opening of baseball and softball season, outdoor track and field, and "March Madness." Some take advantage of international travel with faculty. Students and staff alike look forward to the Agriculture Club's annual spring plant sale and the Art Club sale. April's solar eclipse was partially visible in Pembroke and attracted gawkers in the middle of the school day.

Indoors is just as exciting, with the spring musical, annual PAC talent show, BraveNation Powwow, and probate nights. SGA elections promise enhanced participation in university governance. The PURC Symposium highlights students' recent research and artistic accomplishments. Off-campus, students attend academic conferences and the regional Model United Nations.

Nationally, Americans were shocked by the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, and Donald Trump became the first former U.S. president to be convicted of a crime — 34 felony counts in all. Pro-Palestinian protesters camped out and demonstrated at colleges nationwide, seeking divestiture from interests in Israel. Iowa's Caitlin Clark broke the all-time Division 1 college basketball career scoring record with 3,685 points, but it was the Gamecocks who won the women's national championship, finishing with a perfect 38-0 season.

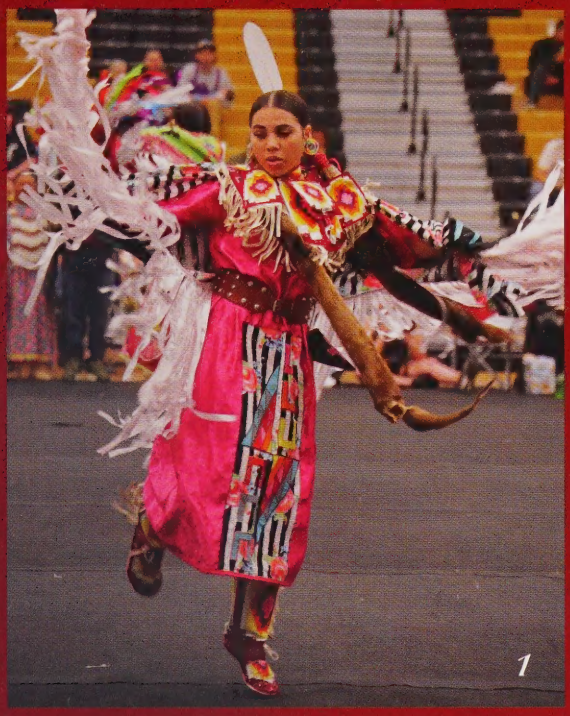


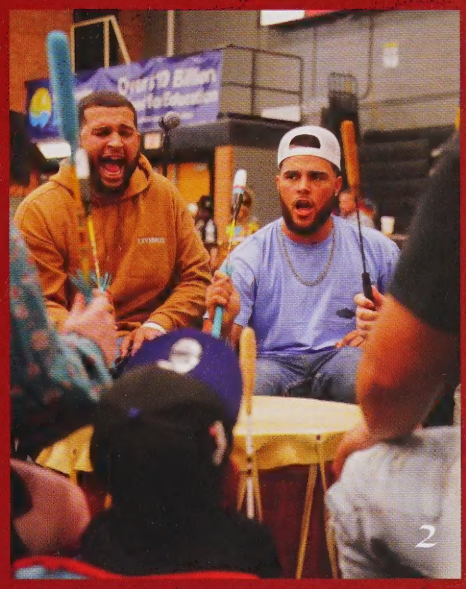


The Heartbeat

The drum is the one of the most significant instruments among Native Americans, representing the heartbeat of Mother Earth, connecting people to their traditional spiritual heritage, and serving as a unifying element in powwows and other ceremonies or rituals. Drumming and singing at the annual BraveNation Powwow and Gathering on March 23 was provided by several ensembles who participated in the drum-circle competition. The event inside the main gym featured a competition arena where dancers such as **Olivia Goins** (above) proudly showed the bright colors of their personalized regalia. She took 2nd Place in Teen Women's Fancy Dance. **Charlie Hedgepeth** (above left) wears what is known as a "roach" on his head and a bustle of feathers on his lower back. He took 3rd Place in Men's Northern Traditional Dance.

Photos by Mykayla Brady





1) Madison Strickland took 1st Place in Teen Women's Fancy Dance.

2) Seth Cummings (left) and Dustin McMillan of the group Red Clay and Hunting Spirit provide the beat for a dance competition while also being judged for their performance.

3) Patrick Green watches others while waiting to compete.

4) Mable Moses, a former Senior Miss Lumbee, still wears her crown.

John Oxendine enjoys a father-daughter moment in the middle of the arena.

Fringe may be included under the headband and beaded forehead medallion.

Sherlyn López-Baez
"No me queda más"

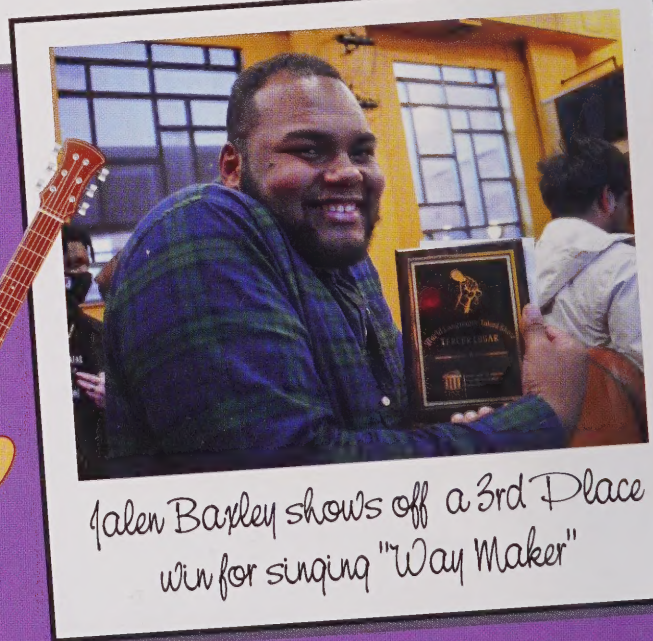
Hannah Trogden
"La bamba"

All participants received a gift!

Jimena Díaz-Becerril & Michela Gritti

Jasmin Carballido & Cyle Addison

Fernando Carranza-Toledo, Layne Lewis
Eduardo Carranza-Toledo



Jalen Baxley shows off a 3rd Place win for singing "Way Maker"

Caleb Gilbert
"Vas a llorar por mi"

Accompaniment was provided by music industry major Tramel Denning

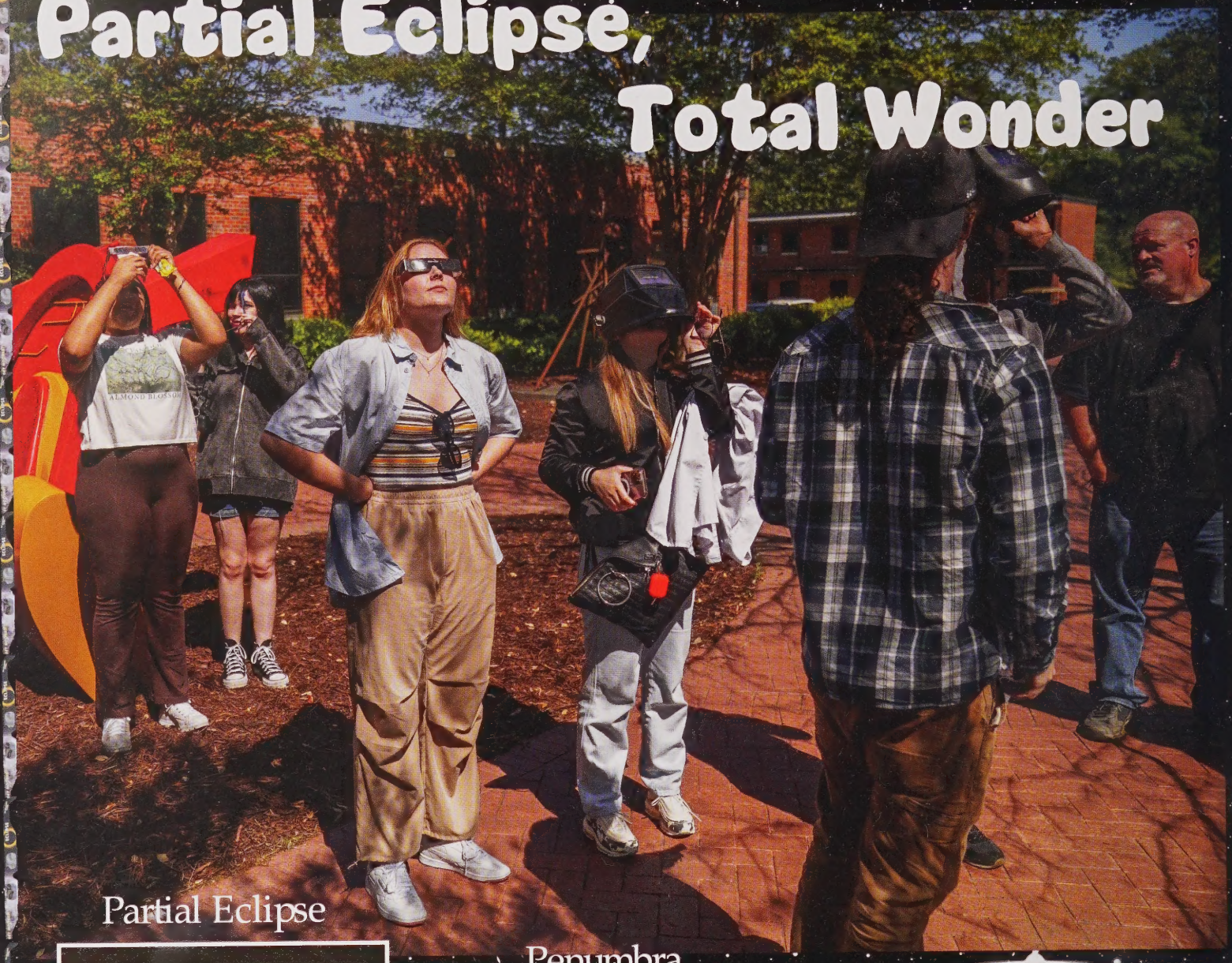
Alexander Aquilar Ramirez & Fernando Carranza-Toledo

Faculty in the World Languages program organized a friendly talent competition on the evening of March 28, 2024, in the Moore Hall auditorium. Judges included alumni Kevin Love and Zelma López, local Spanish teachers. All of the performances were in Spanish. Plaques were awarded for first, second and third place. Winners included: psychology major Jalen Baxley accompanied by Tramel Denning on piano; brothers Eduardo and Fernando Carranza-Toledo with music education major Layne Lewis providing percussion; and dancing duo Cyle Addison and Jasmin Carballido. The MCs were Jimena Diaz-Becerril and Michela Gritti, who also performed.

¡Tenemos talento!

Dr. Ana Cecilia Lara thanks everyone who made the show possible

Partial Eclipse, Total Wonder



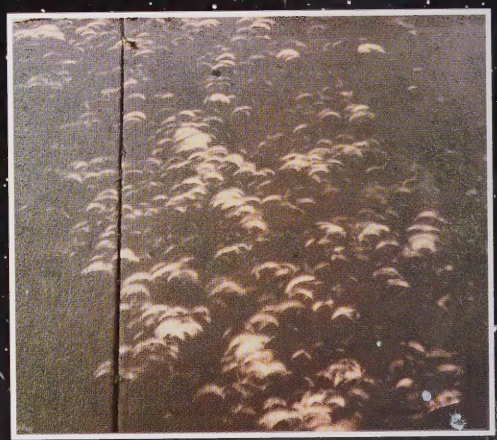
Partial Eclipse

Although we did not experience a total solar eclipse on campus, the whole of this celestial event took about 2.5 hours from start to finish.

Penumbra

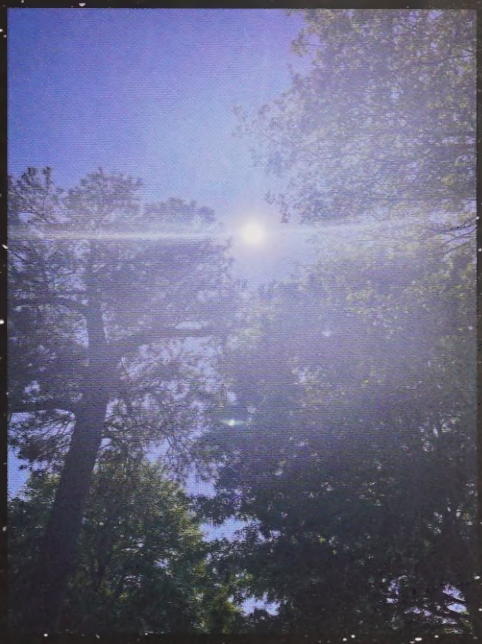
The moon's shadow during a solar eclipse has two forms: the umbra (sun completely blocked) and the penumbra (only partial blockage).

Leaf Crescents



Tiny spaces between the leaves of a shade tree outside Old Main act as pinhole projectors, dappling the sidewalk with images of the crescent sun.

Opposite page: Art professor Adam Walls brings his sculpture students out to the Quad with safety glasses and welding masks, including Sara Jorgensen (center) and Iva Angjeleska (under helmet).



Seth Rogers enjoys the viewing by using a commercially available filter to protect from damage to his sight.

Broadcasting professor Terence Dollard watches the phenomenon on his way into work in Old Main.

Dr. Jamie Litty (left) and Sallyann Clark of the Mass Communication department manage to take a selfie while observing the moon's path.

Alumna and professional adviser Chenoa Chavis takes an office break to see the rare event.

Although parts of the country enjoyed a total eclipse on April 8, 2024, the magnitude in Robeson County was more like 78% coverage. It was the first total solar eclipse to cross the United States since August 2017. The next isn't due for another 20 years, so it's no exaggeration to say "Ya' had to be there" on April 8. Indeed, some people traveled to places in Texas, Missouri, Ohio and New England to experience the totality. Cheap protective viewing glasses could be purchased online, along with similar filters for smartphone cameras. A welder's helmet from sculpture class would also do the trick! The phenomenon began shortly before 2 p.m. and proceeded slowly until reaching the maximum eclipse in our viewing area, around 3:15 p.m. Campus remained brightly lit but eerily overcast, and then it was back to work!

They had to be there!

Since the Indianhead last went to press, two different groups took trips to Spain and another group went to France. During spring break 2024, Drs. Milagros Lopez-Fred and Ana Cecilia Lara of the World Languages program took students to Barcelona and Madrid, which was perfect for Spanish immersion. Dr. Carla Rokes and students from the Department of Art traveled to Spain with UNCP donor Vivian Jacobson, an expert on painter Marc Chagall. Jacobson has established an endowment for art-related academic travel. Students in the College of Business and Economics traveled to France in May with Dr. Scott Cohen. All students on the international business track are required to complete at least three credit hours of study abroad.

Immersing oneself in another country to learn about their customs and cultures firsthand, and to share international ideas and experiences, is what study abroad is about. Academic travel such as this can help students develop new perceptions about themselves and others. You can have your own personal growth mission with study abroad, being able to get out of your comfort zone and to interact with others in a new setting.

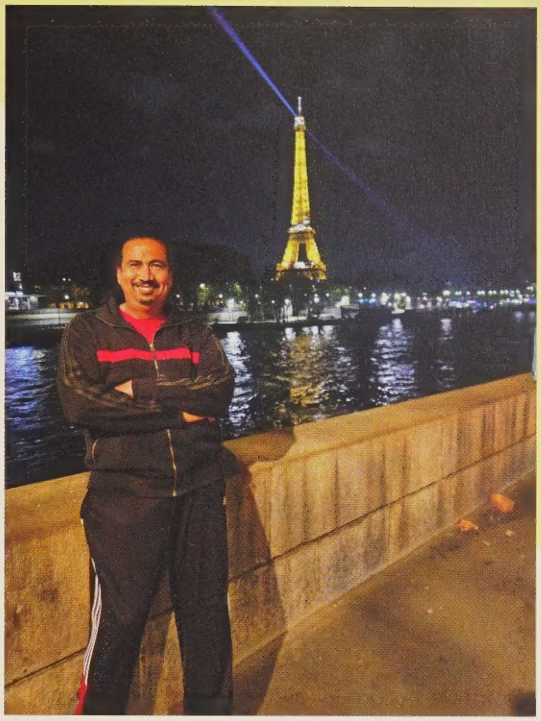
Students learned how artisans renovate the historic stained glass of French churches and then tried some of the techniques.

Top (L to R): Pocahontas Seaberry, Kenyonna Deese, Katerina Lesane and Aaliyah Pamplin in Montpellier, France.

Above: Dr. Carla Rokes, Vivian Jacobson, Jessica Plessinger, Monika Czartoszewski and Kathleen Ertz get as close as is allowed to Picasso's renowned painting "Guernica" in Madrid.

Profile

Nick Oxendine

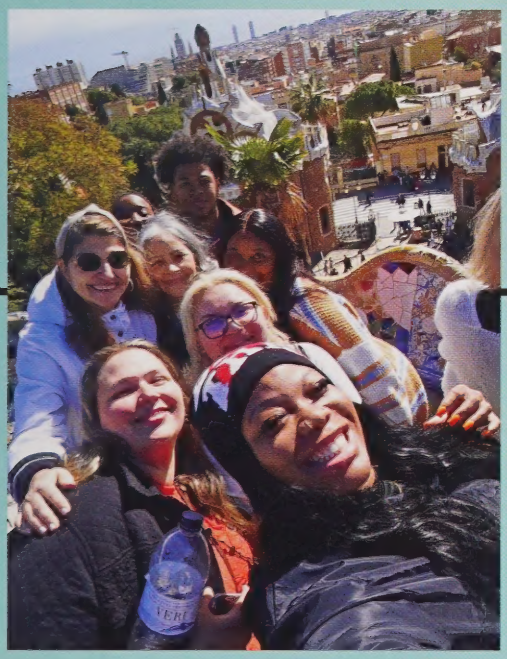


Everything about Nicholas Oxendine says "non-traditional student." A 45-year-old Navy veteran and father of two teenagers, who commutes every day from Rowland, double-majoring in accounting and business administration, you would think he would be frazzled, with no time to get involved on campus. But Nick decided to make the most of his time here and has gone so far as to be a leader in his fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon, which made a return to campus last year. He also holds leadership positions in the Accounting Club, Investors Club, and the Crypto Club, while serving on the Dean's Advisory Board in the Thomas College of Business and Economics. Time management is key.

"You just have to be super-prepared ahead of time, especially with kids," he says. "When you decide to go to college at a later age in life, it becomes your goal to not only attend but to be successful. It is my only job to do so right now."

Nick came into the major knowing a thing or two about business, having owned some enterprises of his own in the past, and wanted a major that would prepare him for business ownership again in the future. During his military service, Nick discovered a love for travel. At UNCP he has taken advantage of a faculty-led study abroad class that took him to France and Spain. "Surprisingly, I had never been to Spain, and it was breathtaking," he says. "The food, the views, all of it." With graduation set for the summer, Nick has already been accepted into UNCP's MBA program and intends to start in Fall 2025.

--Profiled by Michele Chavis



Above, L to R: BreAnna Branch, Monika Czartoszewski and Dr. Carla Rokes grab a selfie in Madrid's Buen Retiro Park.

Left: Students enjoyed four days in Barcelona before heading to Madrid with their World Languages faculty.

PIPPIN

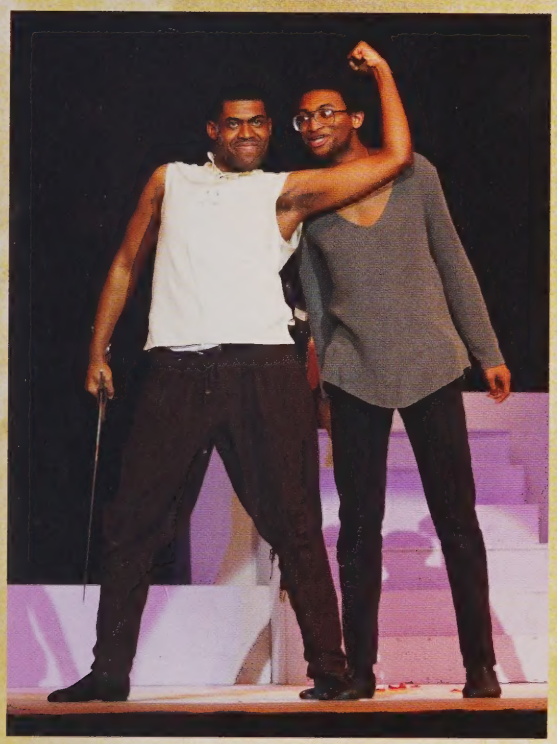
Madison Cain said, "Getting to play Catherine was a dream come true, and I see parts of myself in her. Her resilience and ability to see the best in people is absolutely inspiring."

Theatre major Mya Bryant provides comic relief in the role of Berthe, Pippin's grandmother.

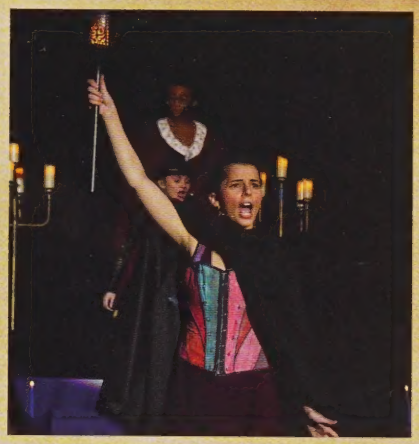
Marquis Crosland (left) said the production was "exciting, innovative, exquisite, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I thank God for that experience." Christan Coto (right) said the cast brought good energy and made the show magical. Center: music major Layne Lewis.

MEET THE CAST!

Leading Player - Chelsea Williams
Pippin - Joseph Holder
Charles - Jaimere Green
Fastrada - Cameron Holder
Lewis - Kadarius Johnson
Berthe - Mya Bryant
Catherine - Madison Cain
Theo - Nile Smith
Cyle Anderson, Kayla Larraga Ruiz, Andrew Pratt, Ayanni Jones Carter, Christian Coto, Ilya Smith, Timothy Williams, Marquis Crosland, Shandi Tilson, Lauren Granderson, De'Ja Mcintyre, Cheyenne Ward and Layne Lewis



Kadarius Johnson (left) and Joseph Holder



Cheyenne Ward

Chelsea Williams

Jamiere Green portrays Charles, based on the Emperor Charlemagne.

The musical theatre program staged "Pippin" in late April, with accompaniment by the UNCP orchestra. The comedic fantasy with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz was first produced on Broadway in 1972. It came to life in GPAC with a large ensemble cast led by theater major Joseph Holder as the titular character. The show was a hit! Audiences laughed and then gasped each night as the show took its twist, becoming dark and more cynical. Madison Cain played love interest Catherine and explained, "Pippin is a fantastical rock musical that on its face seems to be a comedy. However, it explores deeper themes of self exploration and the pursuit of happiness."

great minds think alike

The 18th Annual Pembroke Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium on April 10, 2024, showcased the research projects or artistic pursuits of approximately 190 students and 67 faculty mentors, from 18 academic departments. Visual arts in a variety of media and musical performances were a counterpoint to the STEM, social science and humanities projects on display in a poster session at the Livermore Library. PURC is led by art professor Brandon Sanderson and an advisory council of faculty who help to steer students toward funded research or academic travel during the year and help to select the student and faculty mentor winners at the end.

Sociology major Christopher Green analyzes the logos of minor league baseball teams with an eye on cultural geography and history.

Left to right: Rajwardhan Shinde, Brenda Chavez Soriano, and Grace Herron

Mason Schwenneker

Facing page, top: Lillian Matthews studies water quality of the Lumber River.

Left: Fallon Taylor was mentored by Dr. Jerry Griffith on the subject of exoevolution and cosmic origins of life.

Jerrod Straiter and Tyler Locklear study aquaponics with tilapia.

Left to right: Karlee Roberts, Fernando Carranza Toledo, Dr. Silvia Smith, Ariana "Gracie" Montanez, Holly Hansen, Ava Cox, Olivia Hall, and John O'Dell

Ink & Color

Left to right: Cameron Lowery shows off her printmaking and Jessica Plessinger displays woodblock prints and a painting.

Games, Music, and Rides, Oh My!

Rockin' the sax, Jennifer Pose leans against her guitarist, Evan Phillips. Pembroke Marching Band might have just found their newest members! Below: Rebecca Sexton is not impressed!

The annual family-friendly Festival at Old Main was held Saturday, April 13, on the Quad. The beautiful weather made rides like the Ferris wheel and tilt-a-whirl that much more fun. Student organizations helped the university welcome the non-traditional students and their children as well as families from the community. Folks could enjoy funnel cakes, lemonade, games and musical performances. Nachos and corn dogs were provided by Sodexo. Volunteers got free t-shirts, and many students stopped by our table to vote on this year's yearbook theme and to use our photo props.

Football player and public relations major Jo Hayes helped with the Indianhead in the spring.

Lilly Clausen rides shotgun with Daniel Perdue of Campus Recreation, and SGA President Magally Ortiz-Rojas hooks a ride on the back with Saige Richardson.

Below: Asa Locklear accepts donations and will get hit in the face with a "pie" in a fundraiser for Phi Sigma Nu.

Below left: Alpha Pi Omega offers a giant "Connect" game at their sorority's table.

Bottom left: Assistant Women's Basketball Coach Donald Bohannon and Athletic Communications Director Morgan Sheehan tried their hands at the axe throw.

Harmony Somerville and Eja Hagwood

track and field

The men's team placed second at the Conference Carolinas Outdoor Championships in Myrtle Beach in April with a team total of 149.5 points.

The sport where running in circles gets you somewhere

After a second-place finish at their indoor conference championships in February of 2024, the men's track & field team got their outdoor season officially underway when they competed at the Alan Connie Shamrock Invitational March 14-16 in Myrtle Beach and scored a fifth-place finish overall with 45.5 points. In the field events, Tyshone Bolden, Jr., placed fourth in high jump, and Kendrick Lewis was fourth in triple jump. On the track, the 4x400 meter relay team's first-place finish with a time of 41.04 was a highlight of the action.

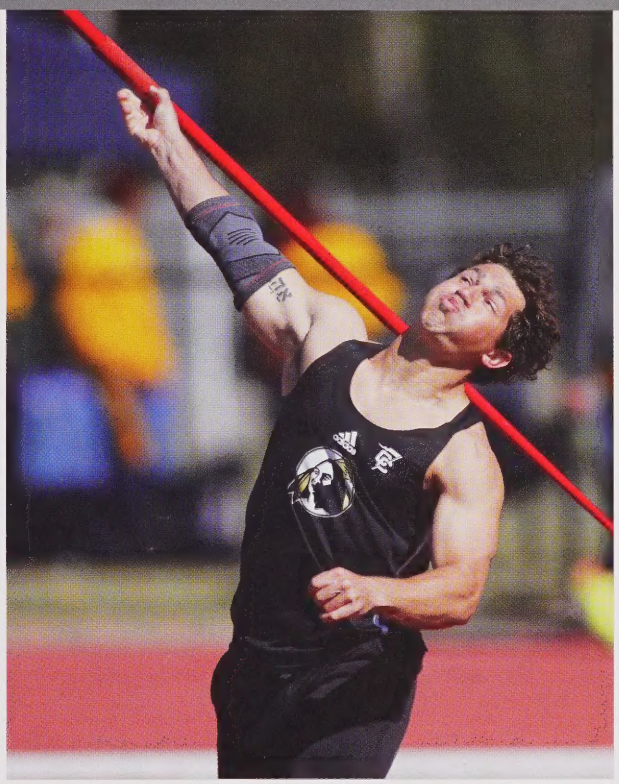
The Braves sent Delsin Burkhart to the Raleigh Relays at NC State, where he recorded a conference-best time of 3:58.66 in the 1,500-meter. He placed 181st in a field of 216 runners, many of them Division 1 All-Americans. On the third day he placed 110th in the 800-meter with a time of 1:54.75, a second-best time in Conference Carolinas, where he also holds the best time (1:52.80).

At the Blue Bear Invitational the men brought home four top-3 finishes, including a second-place finish and personal best in the 800-meter for Gabe Blackwelder (2:00.66), with Sean Todd right on his heels (2:00.74). Trent Brown had a second-place finish and personal best in javelin (51.49m). Rounding out the action, Bolden, Jr., placed second in high jump (1.93m).

In their only home meet of the season on April 6, the Braves picked up 6 event titles, 20 top-three finishes, and a NCAA D2 Provisional mark by the 4x100m relay team of Makhel Henry, Braylon Brooks, Ny'lon Fair-Steele and Travon Morrow (40.55). Three field athletes took first place in their events: Bennie Oxendine in the hammer throw (45.21m), Cameron Ferguson in the long jump (6.98m) and Cole Thomas in pole vault (3.2m).

When the Braves turned their focus to the conference championships April 26-27 at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium, they made a strong showing with event titles in the 800 (Delsin Burkhart) and 4x400 relay (anchored by Sean Townes). Second-place finishes in high jump (Tyshone Bolden), pole vault (Cole Thomas), and triple jump (Kendrik Lewis) contributed to the team's second-place finish overall, out of 12 teams, with a total of 149.5 points.

BRAVES CLASSIC

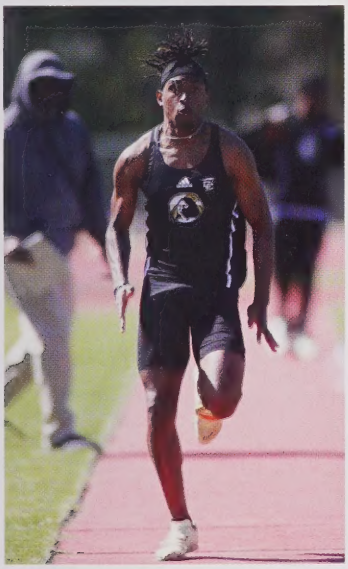


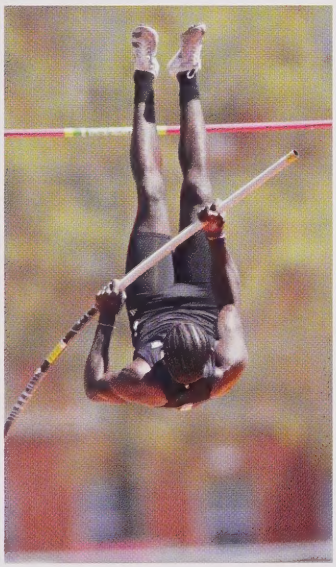
Top left: Walker Mabe grabs the baton from Jack Frye as a member of the 'B' team in the 4x100 relay, while Braylon Brooks (right) leads the 'A' team to a first-place finish in 40.55 seconds.

Above: Kevin Vazquez keeps a steady pace in the 1500m race, where he placed ninth.

Far left: Cedric Douglas competes in hammer throw.

Left: Ben Oxendine makes a good showing for the Braves in the javelin throw, taking second place with a distance of 49.6m.





Far left: Caleb Mason powers down the runway for the long jump.

Middle: Trent Brown is on his way to a second-place finish in pole vault with a height of 3.2m.

Left: Will Clancey is on pace to clock a personal-best time of 4:15.54 and a second-place finish in the 1500m.

Back Row, Left to Right: Ta'Niyah Glaspie, Katie-Marie Sherlock, Gloria Nutsigbe, Amanda Sacoto, Comfort Agwu, Jaylyn Lane, Jenella Olaleye, and Raven Haston
Middle Row: Michela Gritti, Arianah Davis, Madison Gibson, Danielle Sanchez, Makayla VanDusen, Alycia Artman, Kathryn Anderson, Malea Bennewitz
Front Row: Mariah Spencer, Melvia Puac, Kyleigh Pollock, Jaqueeta Moise, Carina Fiorucci, Leticia Pena

They're leaving it all on the track. . . and field!

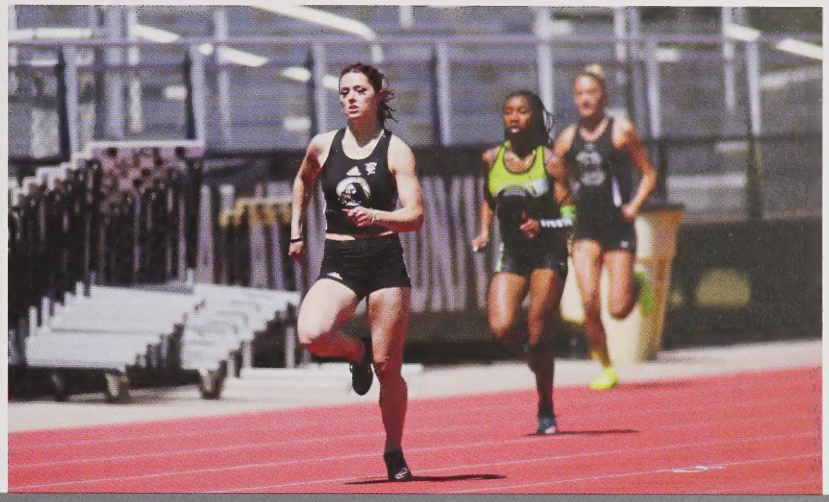
Coming off their second-place team finish at the indoor conference championships in February, the Braves were poised for a great start to the outdoor season when they traveled to Myrtle Beach for the Alan Connie Shamrock Invitational March 14-16, where freshman Moureen Kimaiyo and grad student Kathryn Anderson each broke school records in their events. Kimaiyo won the 5,000-meter run with a time of 17:50.30, and Anderson took second in the 10,000-meter with a time of 38:38.84.

At the Trojan Relays in Mount Olive, freshman Carina Fiorucci broke the Braves' outdoor pole vault record, clearing the bar at 3.2 meters. McKylee Mosby took second place in the 100-meter hurdles (15.59 seconds), and Madison Gibson was third in the 100-meter run (12.11). Four women earned personal bests at the meet, including Alycia Artman in hammer throw and Jazmine Lorenzo in the 800-meter run.

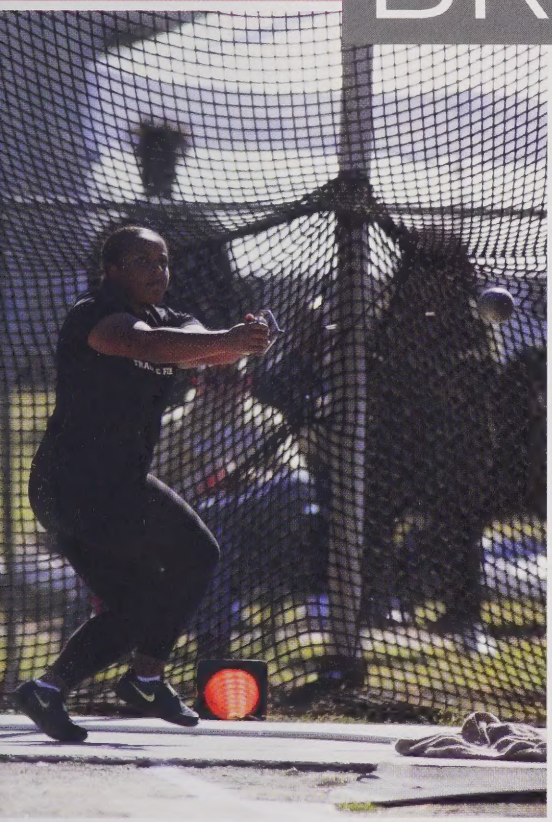
Fiorucci continued her record-breaking season in pole vault with a new school record at the VertKlasse Meet on April 5 in High Point, clearing the bar at 3.34 meters. She was the top Division 2 finisher in a competition with at least 30 women from Division 1 schools across the Southeast.

At their only home meet, the women had a tremendous showing in the Braves Classic on April 6, 2024. Winning individual event titles were Gibson (long jump), Fiorucci (pole vault), Anderson (5,000m) and Katie-Marie Sherlock (400m). Seven women earned personal bests, such as Arianah Davis, who had a third-place finish in the 100-meter run (12.35).

At the season-ending Conference Carolinas Championships April 26-27, the team improved to a third-place finish overall, up two notches from the previous year, with a team total of 115 points. Kimaiyo set a new meet record when she took the top podium spot in the 5,000-meters, and Gloria Nutsigbe was first in the shot put (12.27m). Artman took first place in discus, and Anderson took second in the 5,000-meters. Other highlights included a third-place finish for the 4x100-meter relay squad of Raven Haston, Kirsten Shuford, Jaylyn Lane and Arianah Davis (47.37).



BRAVES CLASSIC

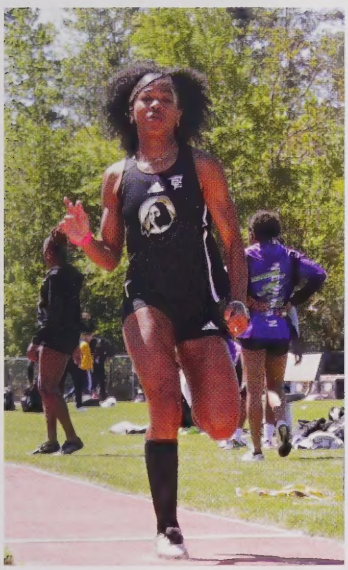


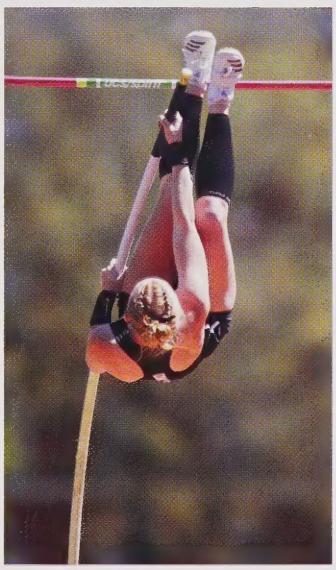
Top left: Arianah Davis receives the baton from Madison Gibson as she anchors their second-place finish in the 4x100m relay.

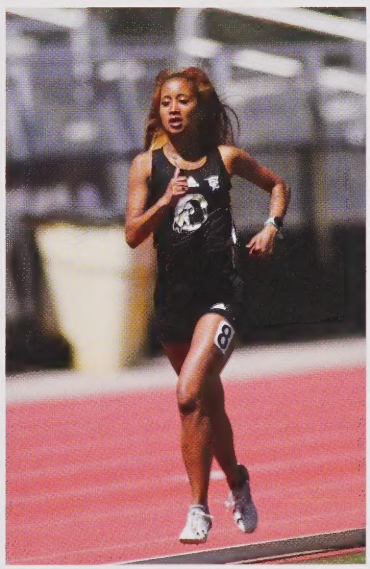
Above: Katie-Marie Sherlock pulls ahead of the pack in the 400m, where she got the win.

Far left: Alycia Artman earns a personal best of 41.44m in the hammer throw.

Left: Makayla VanDusen prepares to throw a personal best in the javelin at the distance of 28.06m.







Far left: Arianah Davis is about to launch herself to a third-place finish in the long jump.

Middle: First place in pole vault goes to Carina Fiorucci with a height of 3.2m.

Left: Mariah Spencer reaches a personal best time of 2:47.50 in the 800m.

Left to Right: Chessa Lee , Melissa Guerra Landa, Michelle Guerra, Lauren Locklear, Emmerson Bartley, Toni Blackwell, Coach Hannah Luckett

Tough team, tougher season

Coming off back-to-back Conference Carolina Championship titles, the Braves finished in spring of 2024 in an unfamiliar position. They'd lost at least three of their leading golfers to graduation the year before, and got off to a rough start in the fall portion of their schedule before showing the future promise of their newcomers in the spring.

At the the AU-Erskine Fall Kickoff in Greenwood, South Carolina, in September of 2023, Chessa Lee carded a five-over-par in the final round but it was not enough to lift the Braves out of last place. The junior P.E. major had the Braves' best score (77) after three rounds over two days.

The Braves continued to struggle and found themselves unable to finish inside the top 10 that semester. Grad student Toni Blackwell led the team at the Converse Invite on Halloween, carding a two-over-par 74 in the final round, leaving her tied for 14th place out of 84 golfers, but the team finished 11th overall, out of 15 schools.

Spring was rocky, too, and the Braves found themselves finishing in the bottom of two tournaments. The team finished 16th overall out of 17 schools in the LMU Spring Intercollegiate, Feb. 12-13, 2024. However, Lee and newcomer Emmerson Bartley finished in a tie for 39th place out of more than 80 golfers (+25). The team was last out of 13 at the Low Tide Intercollegiate in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, before finding themselves in the top 10 for the first time all season when they competed in the Converse Spring Invite, March 11-12, and tied for 3rd place with Milligan University and Trevecca Nazarene. Transfer student Michelle Guerra Landa led the way with a 12th-place tie in the final round, out of more than 40 golfers.

The Braves gradually improved as the season progressed and rode that March momentum into their next challenge, hosted by Barton College -- taking 3rd place on the first day but wrapping up the tournament in 5th place out of seven teams. On the invidual leaderboard, Blackwell finished the two-day event in a three-way tie for 9th place, carding a 15-over-par 87 in the final round. Lee

Far left: Chessa Lee carefully examines the terrain between the ball and the hole.

Middle: Freshman Lauren Locklear saw action when entered as an individual at multiple events this season.

Left: Toni Blackwell tees up her final season with the Braves and looks to pick up another UNCP degree.

Far left: Emmerson Bartley watches her ball after taking a shot out of the fairway.

Middle: Melissa Guerra, who joined the team in the spring, drives the ball towards the green.

Left: Michelle Guerra Landa thinks about what it will take to sink this putt.

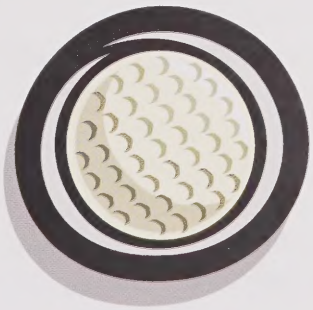
SCOREBOARD

TOURNAMENT	FINISH
AU-Erskine Fall Kickoff	17th of 17
Patsy Randleman Invitational	10th of 11
St. Simons Intercollegiate	18th of 18
Converse Fall Invite	11th of 15
LMU Spring Kickoff	16th of 17
Low Tide Intercollegiate	13th of 13
Converse Spring Invite	3rd of 12
Barton Intercollegiate	5th of 7
Conference Carolinas	8th of 10

took 13th place and had the Braves' best score on the first day (78).

The Braves finished up the season with that unfamiliar point-of-view from near the bottom of the pack at the Conference Carolinas Championship, April 14-16 in Spartanburg. The team dropped from their opening-round 6th place to finish 8th out of 10 teams, 75 strokes over the winner, University of North Greenville. Lee shot the team's best score (five-over-par 77) in the final round and finished the tournament in a three-way tie for 22nd place.

Blackwell graduated from the MBA program in May and was named to the Academic All-District At-Large Team of the College Sports Communicators for the second year in a row and was admitted into UNCP's new master's degree program in occupational therapy.



Top Row, Left to Right: Kadence Sheppard, Jai Deese, Katie Neal, Emily Rose, Athletic Trainer Bradley Jackson, Assistant Coach Lauren Hawley, Head Coach Stephanie Graziani, Grad Assistant Ashtyn Patterson, Grad Assistant Jordan Adcox, Chloe Hunsinger, Chloe Locklear, Samantha Allred, Summer Bullard.

Bottom Row: Charlotte Rose, Makenna Sibbett, Baylee Miller, Makenzie Collins, Kinsley Sheppard, Marijo Wilkes, Kaitlyn King, Kynley Brewer, Madison Davis, Chrstin Calloway, Olivia Hall, Emma Eckhart

Swinging for the fences, growing every game

The softball team faced a lot of adversity and some early injuries in the 2023-24 season that tested them at times, but they also overcame that adversity to make some positives out of a roadblock kind of season. They opened at home Feb. 2 - 4 with the annual UNCP Invitational, and even though the Braves didn't come out on top, they tested some of the teams in the tournament. They hung around with the likes of Kutztown and Davis & Elkins, with 17 hits over the two games, and picked up shutout victories over West Virgina State and Felician University.

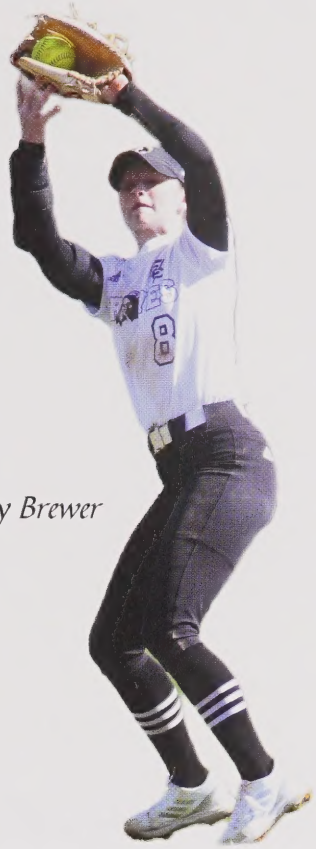
As the season continued, the Braves went head-to-head with some more out-of-conference competition, coming away with the split in hard-fought victories against Anderson University, Catawba, Newberry and Carson-Newman. In-conference, the Braves picked up significant wins against ranked opponents, including Emmanuel and Chowan. The winning pitchers were Kinsley Sheppard and Summer Bullard.

On April 12 the Braves picked up a huge conference win over Barton College in the form of a sweep, and grad student Jai Deese had homers in each game of the doubleheader. It was her grand slam in the second game that gave Deese the single-season home-run record at 13. The Braves capped off the regular season with a split against Mount Olive at home on April 20, coming away with a 10-1 Senior Day victory in Game 1 for winning pitcher Summer Bullard, before falling in Game 2.

The season ended in the Conference Carolinas Tournament when they fell to Southern Wesleyan 6-5 in their play-in game April 25 in Duncan, South Carolina. The Braves finished with an overall record of 19-33 and a conference record of 10-14. Freshman Kynley Brewer and transfer Chloe Locklear were named to the 2024 All-Conference Second Team. Mackenzie Collins and Jai Deese were named to the College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team.

Kaitlyn King gets set to field a ball in a game against Young Harris.

Below: Charlotte Rose watches as a pitch gets past her.



Kynley Brewer

Far left: Jai Deese cruises into second base after a base hit against Chowan.

Left: Summer Bullard keeps Davis & Elkins to just 3 runs in a Feb. 4 loss at home.

SCOREBOARD

SERIES MATCHUPS

0-3 vs Davis & Elkins
0-3 vs Lenoir-Rhyne
0-2 vs North Georgia
2-0 vs Lake Erie
1-1 vs Anderson
1-1 vs Catawba
0-2 vs Wingate
1-1 vs Newberry
1-1 vs Carson Newman
0-2 vs Lincoln Memorial
1-3 vs Francis Marion
1-1 vs Converse
3-1 vs Chowan
1-1 vs USC-Aiken
2-0 vs Emmanuel
0-2 vs Young Harris
0-2 vs Belmont Abbey
2-2 vs Barton
1-3 vs Mount Olive

NON-SERIES GAMES

3-8 vs Kutztown
7-0 vs Felician
4-0 vs West Virginia State

PLAYOFFS

5-6 vs Southern Wesleyan

Jai Deese, MaKenna Sibbett and Mackenzie Collins pose during a break against Mount Olive on Senior Day.

Respect All. . .

The baseball team had a historic 2024 season. The Braves did it all: breaking and setting records, dominating the competition, and winning the Conference Carolinas Championship after just three years in the conference. The Braves finished with an overall record of 43-14 and a conference record of 19-11.

The Braves started off the season hot, posting an 11-game winning streak. They continued their success when they entered conference play, taking on tough competition from the likes of Francis Marion University, Emmanuel University, Mount Olive and North Greenville. Head Coach Paul O'Neil added to his historic coaching career when he recorded his 750th win at UNCP in a 13-7 victory over Chowan on March 2.

Notably the Braves racked up a 6-4 record when it came to playing against teams in the Top 25. Their biggest wins came against 2nd-ranked North Greenville, taking the double-header on March 16 after dropping the first game in the series 9-5 the day before. It was their first series win against NGU since rejoining Conference Carolinas three years earlier.

The Braves put up historic numbers on the field by scoring double-digit runs in most games, with the highest scoring game coming in a 24-11 win against King University on April 21 in Bristol, Tennessee.

When it came time for the conference tournament, the fourth-seeded Braves stayed hot to start things off and found themselves in the title game against Belmont Abbey at CaroMont Health Park in Gastonia on May 6, when they shut out the Crusaders in an exciting 10-0 win. The winning pitcher was freshman HL Smith.

Winning the conference title guaranteed an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament for the Braves, their fourth straight appearance. The Braves defeated Young Harris 8-7 in the opening round of the Southeast Regional on May 16 in Salisbury but dropped a game against the host, Catawba, 5-4, the next day. They dropped an elimination game against Young Harris 9-7 on May 18, ending their tournament run.

Fear None

SCOREBOARD

NON-SERIES GAMES

W 21-5 vs Claflin
W 12-7 vs Mercy
L 6-5 vs Coker
W 19-1 vs Glenville State
W 5-1 vs Wingate
W 19-7 vs USC Beaufort
W 10-9 vs Catawba
W 4-1 vs Coker
W 9-6 vs Wingate
W 5-3 vs Catawba
W 19-0 vs USC Beaufort

SERIES MATCHUPS

3-0 vs USC Aiken
2-0 vs Shepherd
3-0 vs IUP
1-2 vs Francis Marion
3-0 vs Chowan
1-2 vs Emmanuel
2-1 vs North Greenville
0-3 vs Mount Olive
3-0 vs Erskine
2-1 vs Barton
2-1 vs Belmont Abbey
2-1 vs King
3-0 vs Southern Wesleyan

PLAYOFFS

W 5-4 vs Emmanuel
W 9-3 vs Erskine
W 5-4 vs Belmont Abbey

CHAMPIONSHIP

W 10-0 vs Belmont Abbey

NCAA REGIONAL

W 8-7 vs Young Harris
L 5-4 vs Catawba
L 9-7 vs Young Harris

Facing page: The team celebrates winning the Conference Carolinas Championship over Belmont Abbey. Photo credit: Bob Stoner for Conference Carolinas

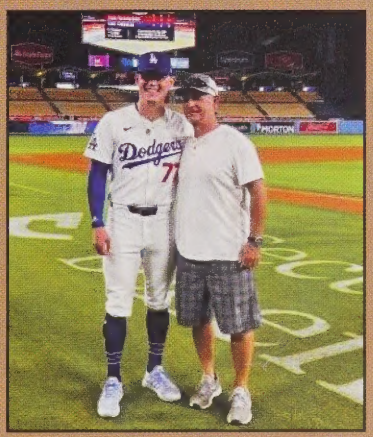
Redshirt senior infielder Carlos Amezquita contributes to the 19-1 victory over Glenville State at home on March 5.

Above: The starters celebrate Senior Day by winning the double-header against Southern Wesleyan University.

Below: Michael Dolberry slides into second base during the game against Southern Wesleyan, before blasting out a home run in the bottom of the sixth inning.

River Ryan makes MLB debut

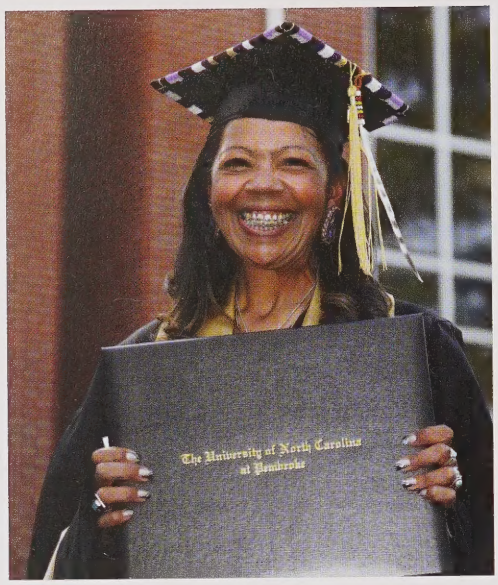
Alumnus River Ryan became the first UNCP baseball player to make his Major League debut when the Los Angeles Dodgers called him up to start against the San Francisco Giants on July 22, 2024. Just prior to that he was pitching for the organization's AAA Oklahoma City Baseball Club. Against the Giants he pitched into the sixth inning before he was relieved. He went 5.1 IP, 4 H, 0 ER, 3 BB, 2 K.

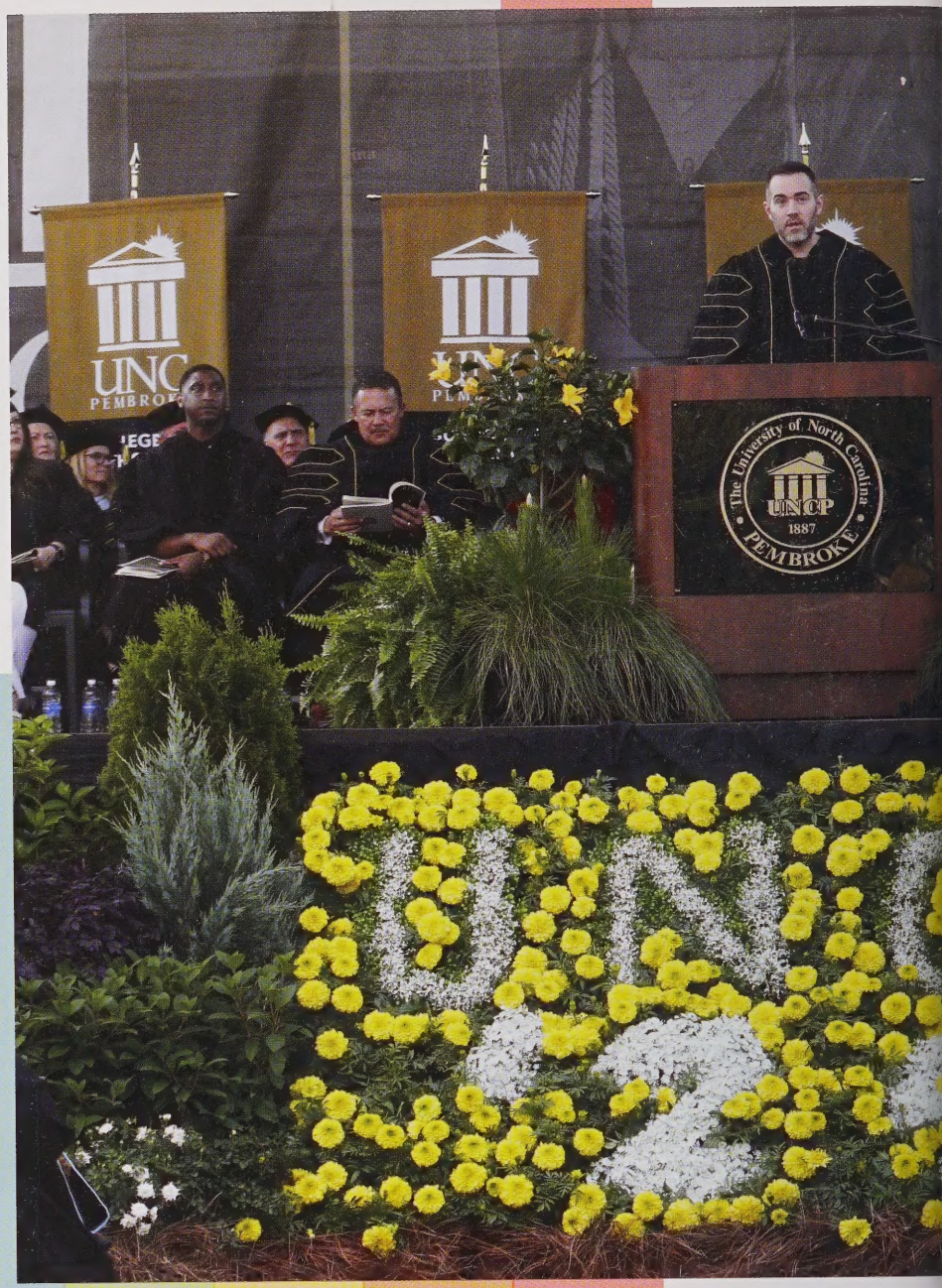


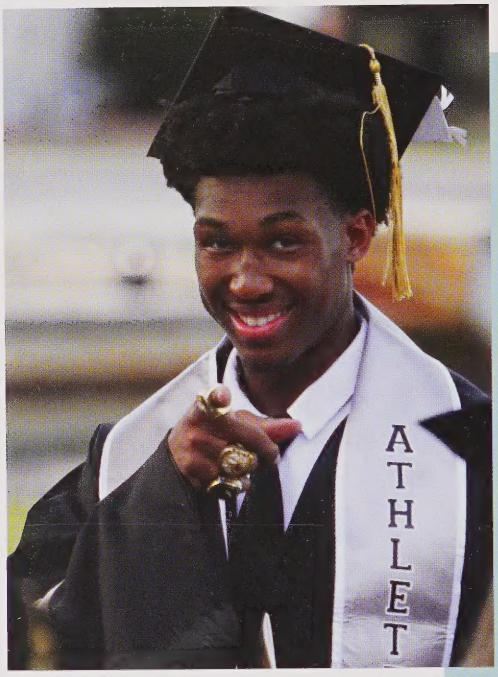
Ryan's next outing with the Dodgers came on July 28 against the Houston Astros. He finished the game against Houston going 5.2 IP and allowed two hits and one run, striking out eight batters and walking three. Ryan **(shown here with UNCP Coach Paul O'Neil after his debut)** was credited with his first MLB win.

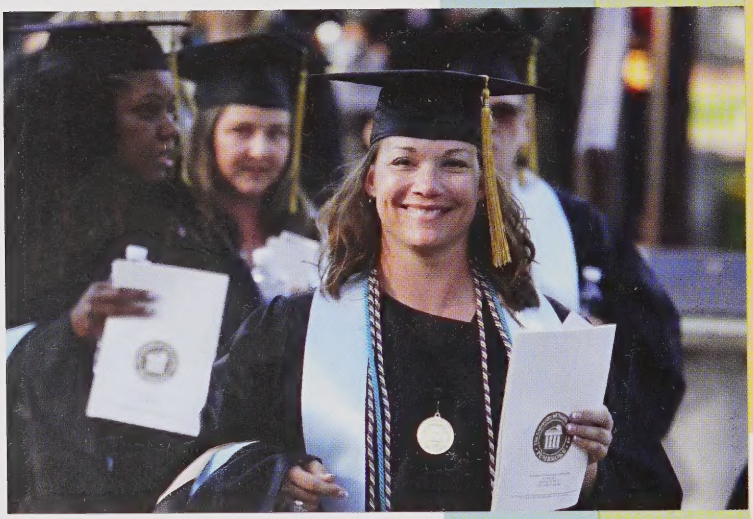
He made two more appearances--against the A's and Pirates--before he exited the Pittsburgh game with a season-ending injury.

--Photo credit: Paul O'Neil

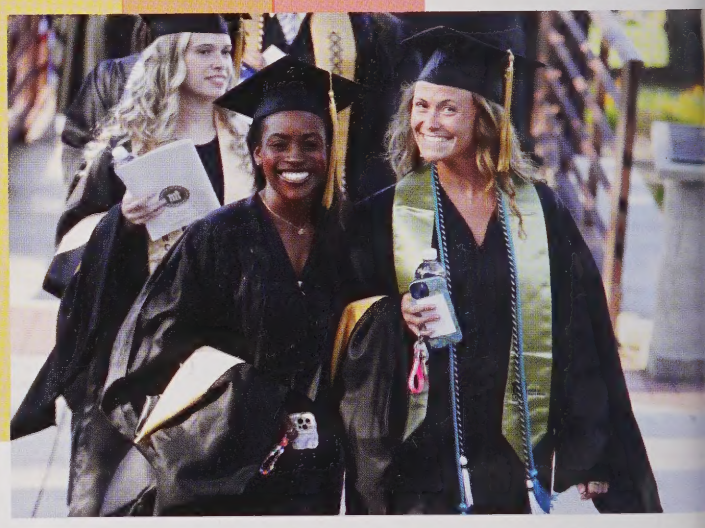








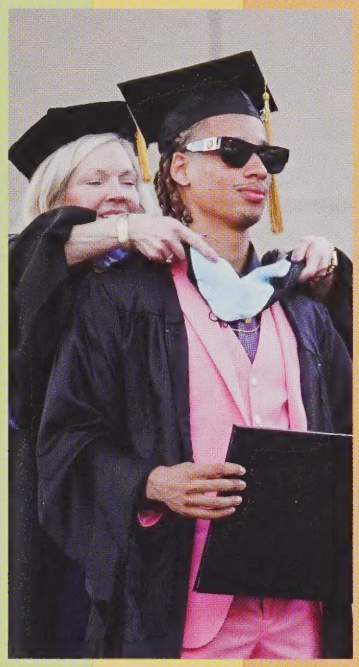
Graduates wear many kinds of stoles, cords and medals to recognize their achievements, and all carry their master's hood to the stage.



Kalia Quienteria Johnson (left) and Kinsey Land are all smiles as they prepare for conferral of the Master of Social Work degrees.

Speaker urges graduates to be the best versions of themselves

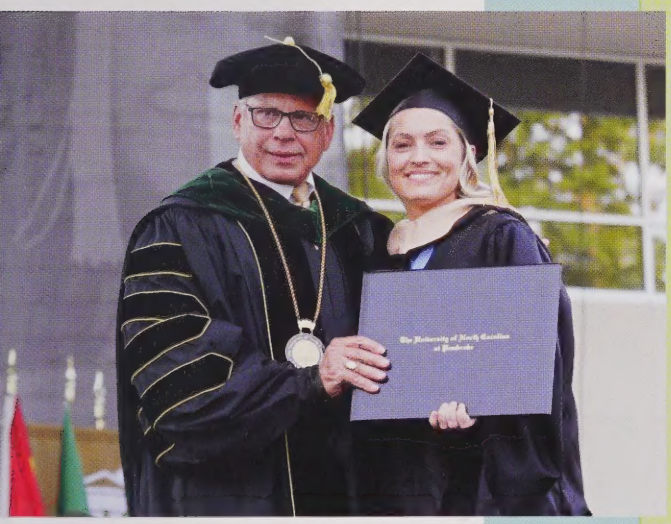
Commencement speaker Jon Clifton, the CEO of Gallup, Inc., the famous survey company, told his eager listeners from the Graduate School on May 3 that "the world needs you now more than ever." In particular the world needs active listeners and people who will help bring out the best in each other, he said. Because of the national mood and declining trust in our institutions, he urged the grad students to be "the best at your craft and the greatest version of yourself."



The university conferred 340 degrees that night to grad students from at least six countries, including India, China, Mexico and Vietnam. The event was held on the Quad again this year, and among the happy recipients of the master's hood were student-athletes such as sprinter **Mark Williams** (above) and basketball player **Cortez Marion-Holmes,** flashing his championship rings (facing page, middle); employees such as UNCP auditor **Carla Jacobs** (facing page, top); other nontraditional students who are parents or grandparents; and some online students who never took a single class on the actual campus.

On stage, a representative from the Graduate Student Organization, Markell Ward, reminded the graduates that their accomplishment not only reflects their personal dedication but also establishes a lasting connection with UNCP. "We urge you to embrace responsibilities with diligence, integrity and knowing you carry the reputation of UNCP with you wherever you go," he said.

In his closing remarks, Chancellor Cummings told the graduates, "Wherever life takes you, know that you always have a home at this university."



Tabi Cain is greeted by her boss, Chancellor Cummings, after earning her MBA while working here full time.

Faculty senate chair tells graduates to 'Take the hero's journey'

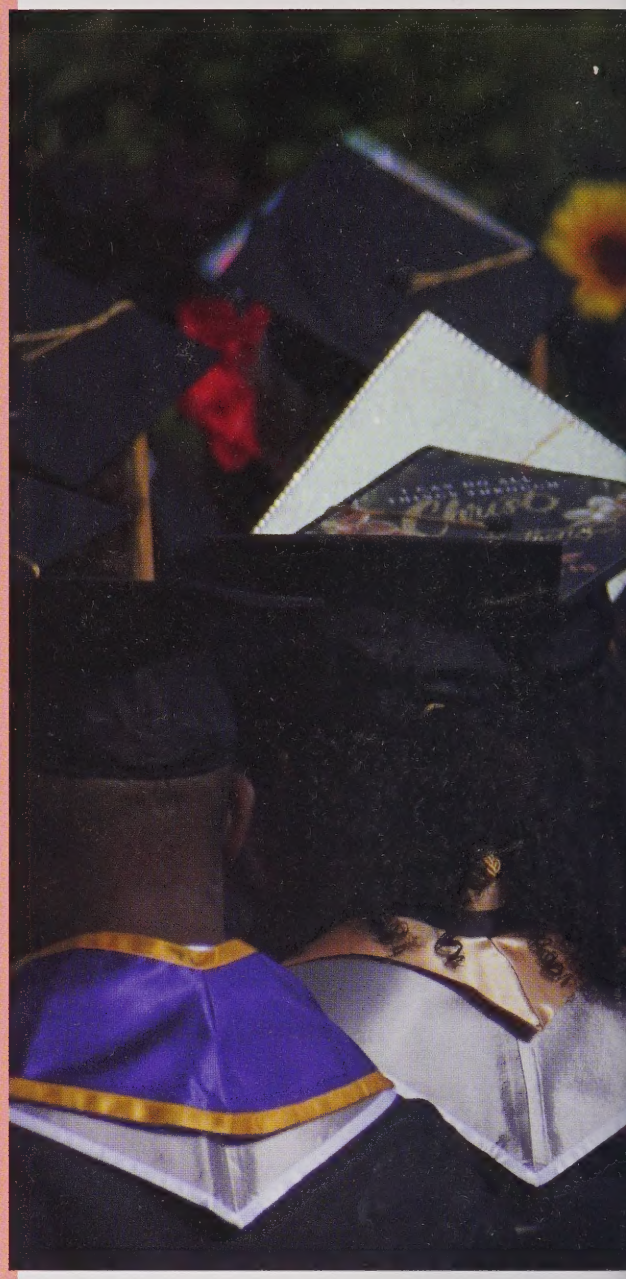
Despite the rain on Saturday morning May 4, the undergraduate class of 2024 celebrated their accomplishments with joy, their smiles shining brightly even as the skies over the Quad darkened.

Commencement keynote speaker Jon Clifton, the CEO of data analytics firm Gallup, talked about the gloom first. "Survey research shows that anger, stress, sadness, pain and worry are up ten points over the past ten years," he said. "And for that very reason we need you right now more than ever." The world needs graduates who can pursue what's amazing about themselves and who can bring out what's amazing in other people, too.

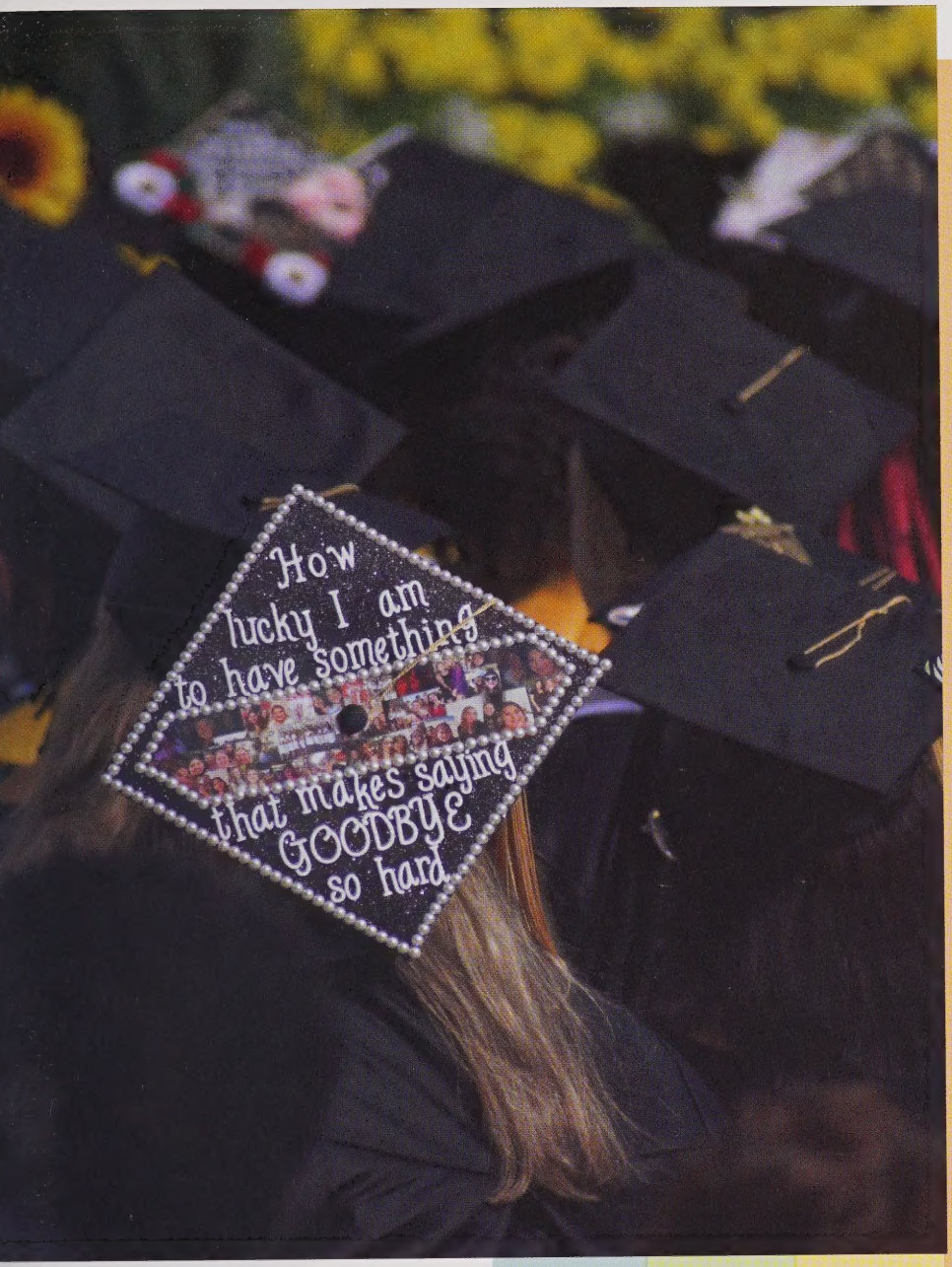
SGA President Aspen Andersson **(right)** pointed out the opportunities for growth, learning and leadership that UNCP students had during their time here. "We have learned to be ourselves, we have learned to fail, we have learned to try again," she said and noted that UNCP is the thing that will tie them together on their separate journeys.

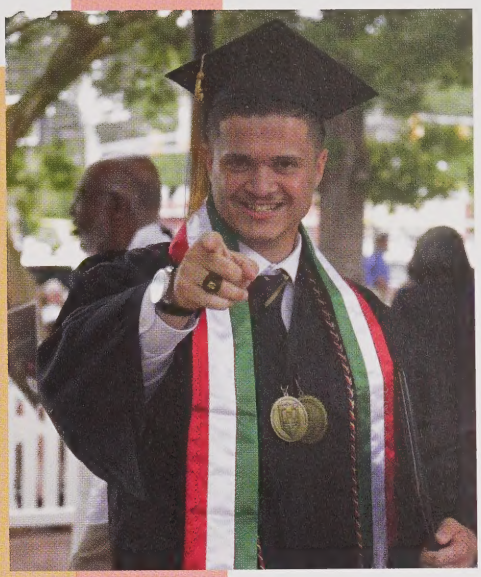
The journey metaphor continued in remarks from theatre professor Holden Hansen, the outgoing Faculty Senate Chair. He explained the transformative nature of the hero's journey, a story type that is universal. "If we happen to not be heroes in the grandest sense," he said, "we must take the hero's journey inside ourselves, both spiritually and psychologically."

The clouds opened up as the university awarded more than 600 degrees, and the platform party stayed as long as there were still graduates in line to have their names called in the pouring rain. Those still lingering turned their tassels before heading out to celebrate their accomplishment.



Skylar Carter is proud to have completed the bachelor of science degree in mass communications, with a major in public relations.





Elizabeth West waves to friends who came to congratulate her on the degree in art, where her emphasis was on studio arts such as drawing and sculpture.

Eja Hagwood (top) and Jayden Worriax (middle) are confident after conferral of the exercise and sport science degree. Bottom: Biology major Zach Powell graduates with honors and a bachelor of science degree.

HOPE MILLS SHRINE CLUB

2024 SUMMER

When spring's symphony fades into the sultry embrace of summer, our region ignites in more ways than one. The longest days of the year unfold with relentless heat, and 2024 was no exception; it was the hottest recorded summer in the Northern Hemisphere. But during peak summertime we hear the echoes of traditions: Lumbee Homecoming, Fourth of July fireworks, the "Strike at the Wind!" outdoor drama, sports camps, summer vacations, and new student orientation.

This season also witnessed pivotal national moments, including an assassination attempt on presidential candidate Donald Trump. Four U.S. Supreme Court decisions make it harder to curb pollution and climate change, yet Mexico elected a climate scientist as their first female president. Cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike caused major IT outages around the world in industries including banking, health care and air travel after a bad software update. Paris played host to the Summer Olympics, where U.S. gymnast Simone Biles nabbed three more gold medals, including a repeat of an individual all-around win.

UNCP received a three-year $950,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to continue engaging students in research in the humanities, by way of a program called REACH that they have funded since 2019. Art historian Vivian R. Jacobson announced a $500,000 endowment to fund art-related travel for students and faculty, and an additional donation she made to the Livermore Library resulted in remodeling of the building's Special Collections area. Here's to a season that has left an indelible mark on the historical memory while charting a course toward the future.

Keep Moving Forward

Some students enjoy their summer by taking a complete break from school. Some get right to work in part-time jobs here or back at home. Some combine school and work in the form of internships for academic credit, or pay, or both.

Summer jobs and internships can provide invaluable practical experience and help to develop essential skills in students' chosen fields. These positions not only provide glimpses into the professional world but also help individuals build their networks and enhance their resumes.

Summer roles can significantly boost clarity and confidence about career paths. They may lead to full-time job offers or further connections that can help launch a career. Embracing these experiences can set the stage for future growth and success. UNCP students found this out in a variety of capacities last summer.

"Being a part of Summer Health Professions Education Program was an amazing experience that taught me how to become a better pre-dental student and an overall better healthcare provider in the future! I'll forever cherish the memories and connections I've made along the way!"

--Auley Abudayya

"If you had told little me that I would spend a summer working in the National Weather Center, I wouldn't have believed you. I've been able to meet so many great people here, and I'm so excited to see what my cohort does in the future. This experience truly is one of a kind."

--Gretchen Gillenwater

Faith Rivera

"I interned at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services under the public health division of the Office of General Counsel. My internship exposed me to public health law and also what it would be like working as an attorney for a government agency. It was a full-circle moment, being a native of Robeson County and getting to meet Julia Pierce, who is the head of the public health division."

--Magally Ortiz-Rojas

"I used to be a very introverted person before going to these conferences and presenting myself, and representing my university to the world has made me a better leader. I have met world leaders, entrepreneurs, and tech innovators through these conferences. I have made my name through robotics championships in the international media. I look forward to do it more! Never stop believing in yourself and remember that men are the creatures to their own circumstances"

-- Tanzimul Fahim

"Working by the beach every day was amazing, and I even had the chance to DJ there, which exposed me to new styles and helped me improve my craft. I launched my business, Cowboy Productions LLC, aiming to create a one-stop-shop corporation. I made custom leather patch hats for various businesses, which was rewarding as I got to design and produce merchandise. The highlight of my summer was fulfilling my firefighter duties, from house fires to water rescues during Hurricane Debbie. Overall, it was a productive and exciting summer filled with growth, learning, and great connections that have helped me become more stable in my own business."

--Trent Brown

"There are so much opportunities open for me. I'm gaining more skills quicker [at Cape Fear Valley Health], but it's more like slowing down and being able to learn from other people and learning what skills they have that I don't have."

--Faith Rivera

"The show was a stepping stone to becoming a better actor and taking a step into a new light towards the acting world."

— Joseph Holder
"Camillo"

UNCP students shine in 'The Comedy of Errors' at Shakespeare in the Pines

The Uprising Theatre Company, founded by UNCP faculty Jonathan Drahos and Carolanne Marano, gave UNCP students a great opportunity in Pinehurst to work or intern while improving their acting chops in a production of Shakespeare's first comedy. And when you stage a literary classic in the "Golf Capital of the United States," you try to blend in! The story involves a case of mistaken identity and a long-lost twin brother. The free performances in Tufts Memorial Park over two weekends in August also included UNCP alumnus Jamonte Madison as the servant Dromio.

Senior theatre major Cameron Holder played Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus (Dr. Drahos), which required a good bit of physical comedy. "The best part about it was this was my first leading-lady role in a Shakespeare play, and my favorite part about it was acting crazy on stage and making people laugh," Holder said.

Drahos, Madison and several students played dual roles in the show.

Top: Antipholus is beset by creditors in a case of mistaken identity as the Duke looks on.

Above, L to R: Marquis Crosland and Sterling Pratt have a farcical take on the characters of the Jailer and Egeon.

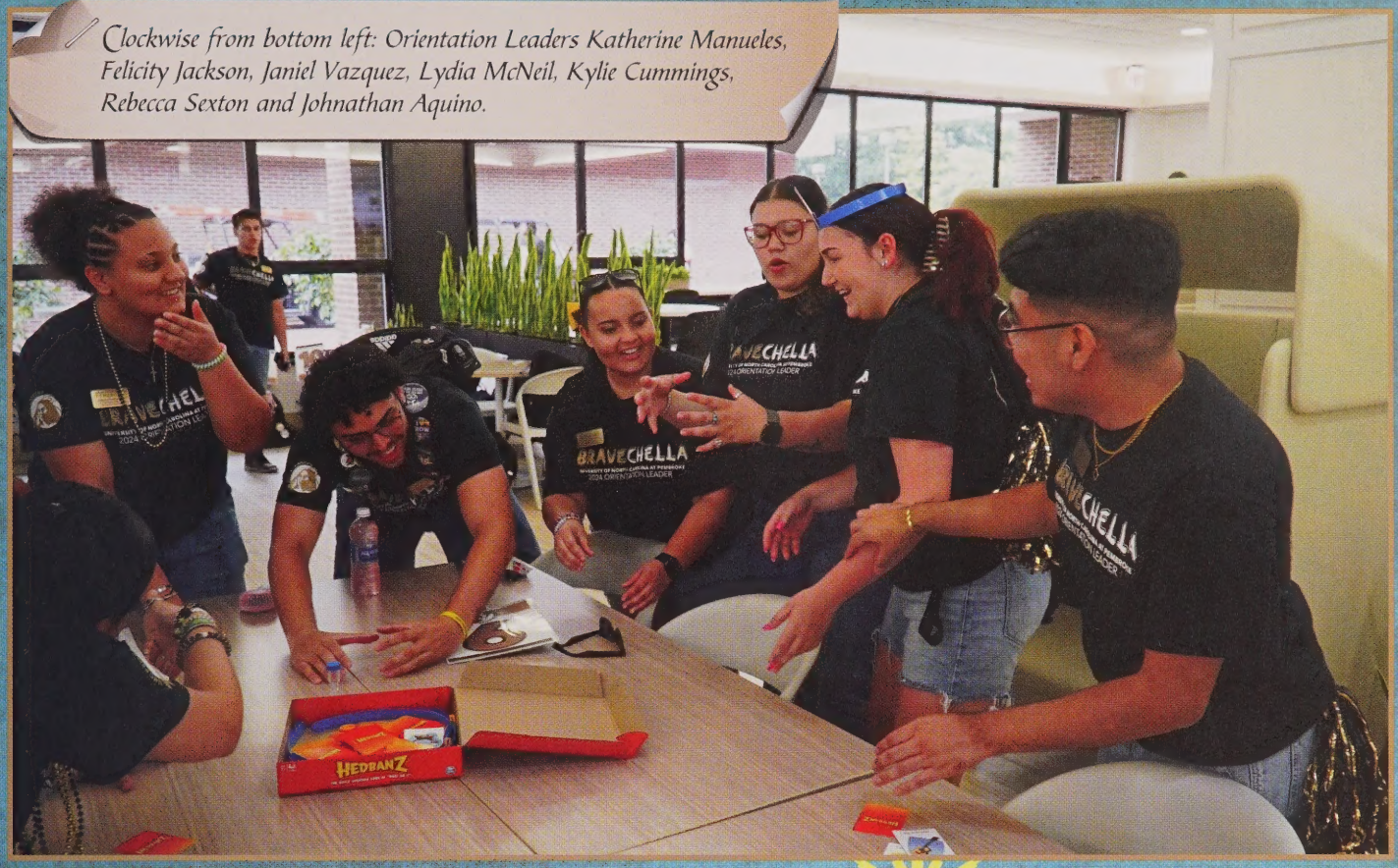
Left: Madison Cain served dual roles, including providing comic relief with instructions for the audience.

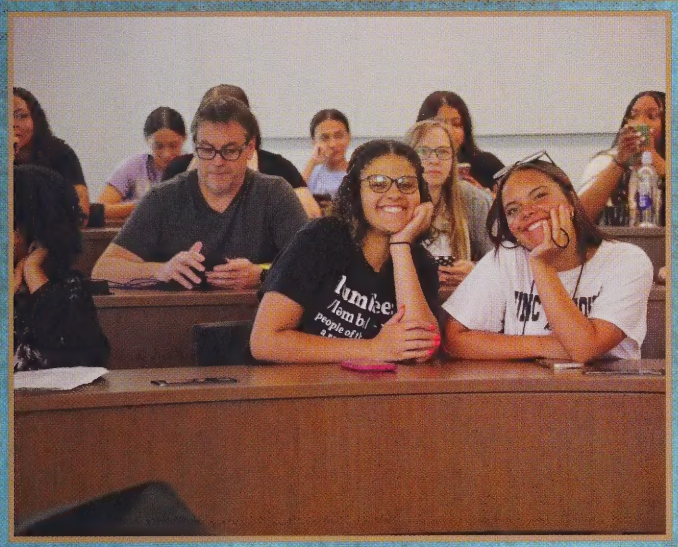
Right: Adriana unknowingly begs her husband's twin not to leave her, while he has eyes for the sister-in-law (Cheyenne Ward).

Follow the Leaders

When new students make their commitment to attend UNCP, the on-campus orientation days give them the opportunity to meet peers who have the same excitement and uncertainties, in addition to meeting student leaders who can show them the ropes. It's still summer, but it's a first step in learning to navigate the college experience. All-day events include registering for classes and learning about financial aid. This year the Orientation Leaders had a fun bonding experience playing Hedbanz **(facing page, top)**.

Clockwise from bottom left: Orientation Leaders Katherine Manueles, Felicity Jackson, Janiel Vazquez, Lydia McNeil, Kylie Cummings, Rebecca Sexton and Johnathan Aquino.





Examples of OSID-Sponsored Events

Students experienced a taste of Native American culture through talks and participation.

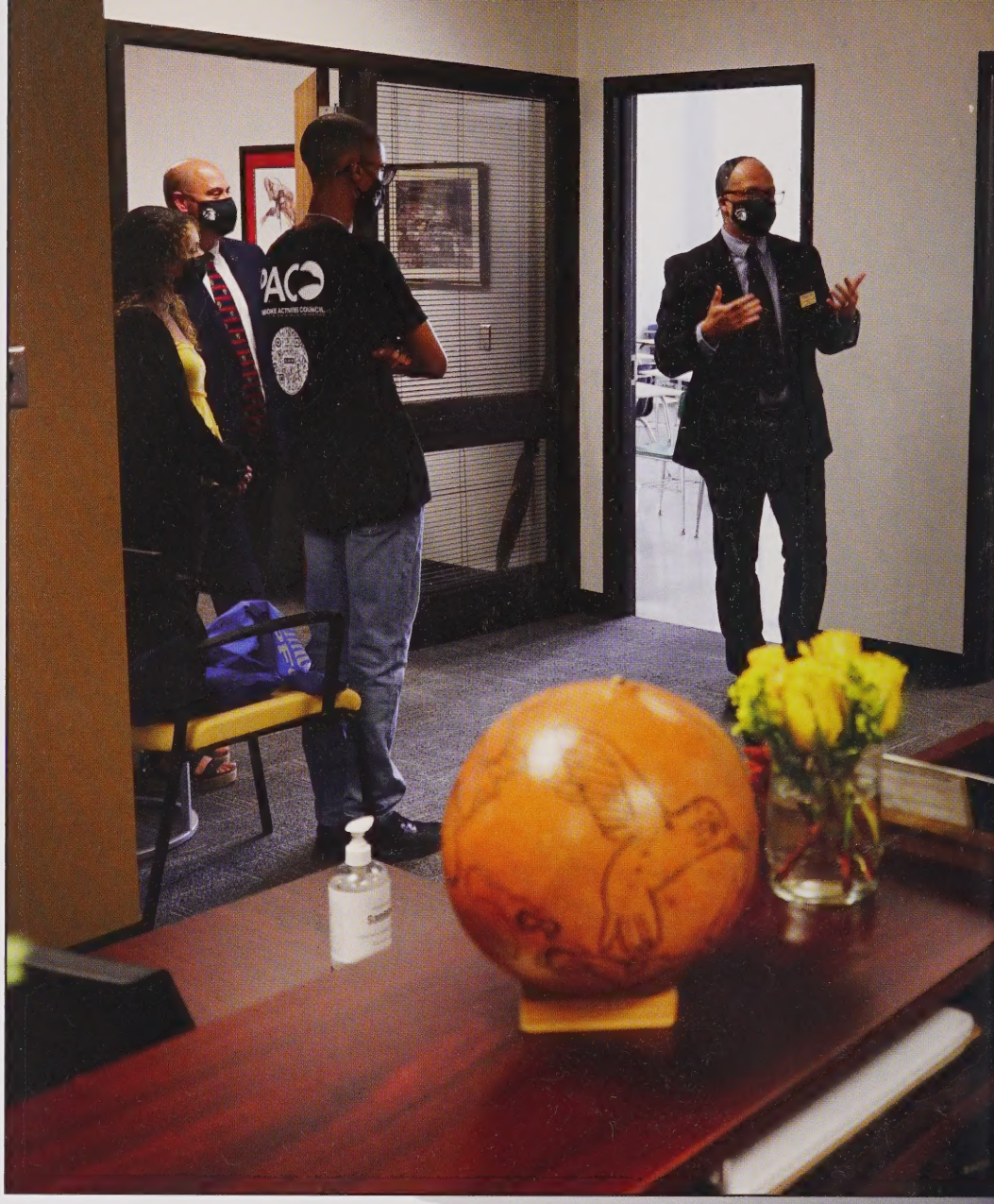
First Night Diversity Extravaganza

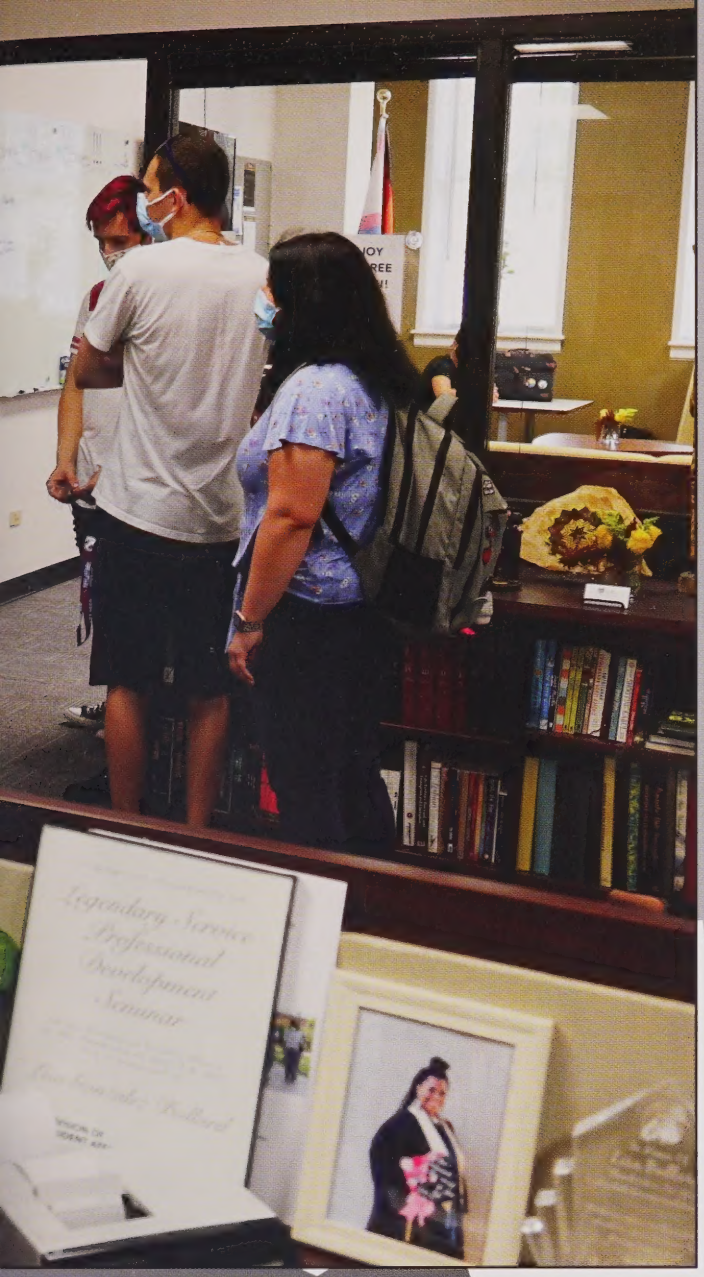
We celebrated diversity of the student body, chalking inclusive messages on campus and parading with posters.

Harmony Walk 2022

Students played bingo for prizes, decorated shirts, and took group selfies while celebrating LGBTQ pride.

Pride Bingo 2024





End of an Era

Office of Student Inclusion & Diversity

In May of 2024 the UNC System Board of Governors voted to repeal the diversity, equity and inclusion policy that was put in place back in 2019. The BOG then added a new policy to "ensure equality of all persons and viewpoints." All 17 schools within the system had until Sept. 1 to implement changes and redirect DEI-related dollars to other student support programming.

If you weren't following the news, you were surprised to come back from the summer and find that UNCP had to dissolve the Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity. Fortunately they were able to reassign the staff elsewhere.

Alumna Shelby Perry was a student worker in the office for four years, helping with communications and marketing, which aligned with her public relations major. "The office played a crucial role in bringing together individuals from various races, ethnicities and cultures to support one another," she said. Aaliyah Pamplin chaired a student committee on gender equality and inclusion. She said with the closing of OSID, "It just holds us more individually accountable as people to see what classes or research we can take to help educate ourselves, and if you're a part of an organization, what event can you do to try to make good, positive change?"

The former OSID suite in Old Main is a shell of its former vibrant and lively self.

Katheryn Crossgrove, also known as Katie, was born and raised in Kentucky. She relocated to Hope Mills at the age of 6, but now her parents live in Raeford. She's a sophomore biology major and the founder of the Bootscootin' Braves.

"I live on campus, and it has helped my experience because I can just go to my dorm after a hard day," Katie says. "But also I miss my bed at home and my dog all the time, so those things can get difficult when I'm having a rough week."

Katie has a zoology concentration. At the age of 15 she started working in veterinary medicine, but right now she works at the campus garden for work-study to have extra cash between semesters. She also dog-sits on the side for her mom's business. She works at her home animal clinic over semester breaks.

Bootscootin' Braves is UNCP's first line dancing club. "We have so much fun, and it's something I am very proud of," Katie says. "Dancing is just so freeing to me." A favorite event on campus for Katie this year was the Homecoming parade, because the club's members became a lot closer from working closely to perfect their dances for it. "And it was funny because Dr. Sales was driving the truck with the float too fast and we couldn't keep up."

Katie advises incoming freshmen to take school seriously and to be involved by joining a club or getting a campus job. "Meet people," she says, "because the likelihood of having a class with someone and being able to start a new friendship or help each other with assignments is so helpful."

Katie says she loves to read but adds, "Lately 'Criminal Minds' has been my favorite TV show."

--Profiled by Aniya Lewis

Katie Crossgrove

"College is stressful, trust me, but if you surround yourself with the right people and take the right classes, and then put in the work, it will be such a fun and wild ride."

student Profiles

Coming back to the place where he practically grew up, first-year student Atticus Power discovered that chatting to different people every day has helped him find peace. Atticus, a Lumberton native, came to Pembroke after spending several summers in multiple camps that were offered at UNCP.

"I came to this campus for too many reasons that I can't really count in my brain, but one of the most important ones was that my mom worked here," Atticus says. "I also think it's because I just remember so many of the professors' faces here from over the summers that it kind of feels like a second home."

After deciding to major in biology with a focus in zoology, Atticus credits Dr. Kaitlin Campbell with helping him fall in love with the power of nature and science. While still only taking general education courses, his enthusiasm for being outside and learning new things in lab assignments has risen.

To Atticus, UNCP has become a safe haven for LGBTQ people like themselves. Furthermore, because the school is so small, Atticus found that it was easier to form closer interactions in the classroom rather than sitting in a large lecture hall like at NC State. Atticus credits his father for inspiring his sense of humor, charisma, and the confidence to be pleasant and bubbly to strangers.

"Sometimes I feel like an outsider here on campus because a lot of my humor comes from a dark place in my life, and I just feel weird sometimes when people don't understand me like that," Atticus says.

When it comes to student clubs at UNCP, one stands out among the seven that Atticus has attended. "It would have to be the Bio Club, even though I know most people get tired of me talking about it.," Atticus says. "I just simply love it. To me, it's just an extremely welcoming and humble club to almost anyone that likes to do bracelet-making and go on field trips to cool places that talk about the importance of ecosystems."

--Profiled by Corey Vanderroest

Atticus Power

"If I were to give advice to someone who feels alone here on campus, it would be to please keep talking. There are so many friendly people out there that you can meet each day."

ARNING

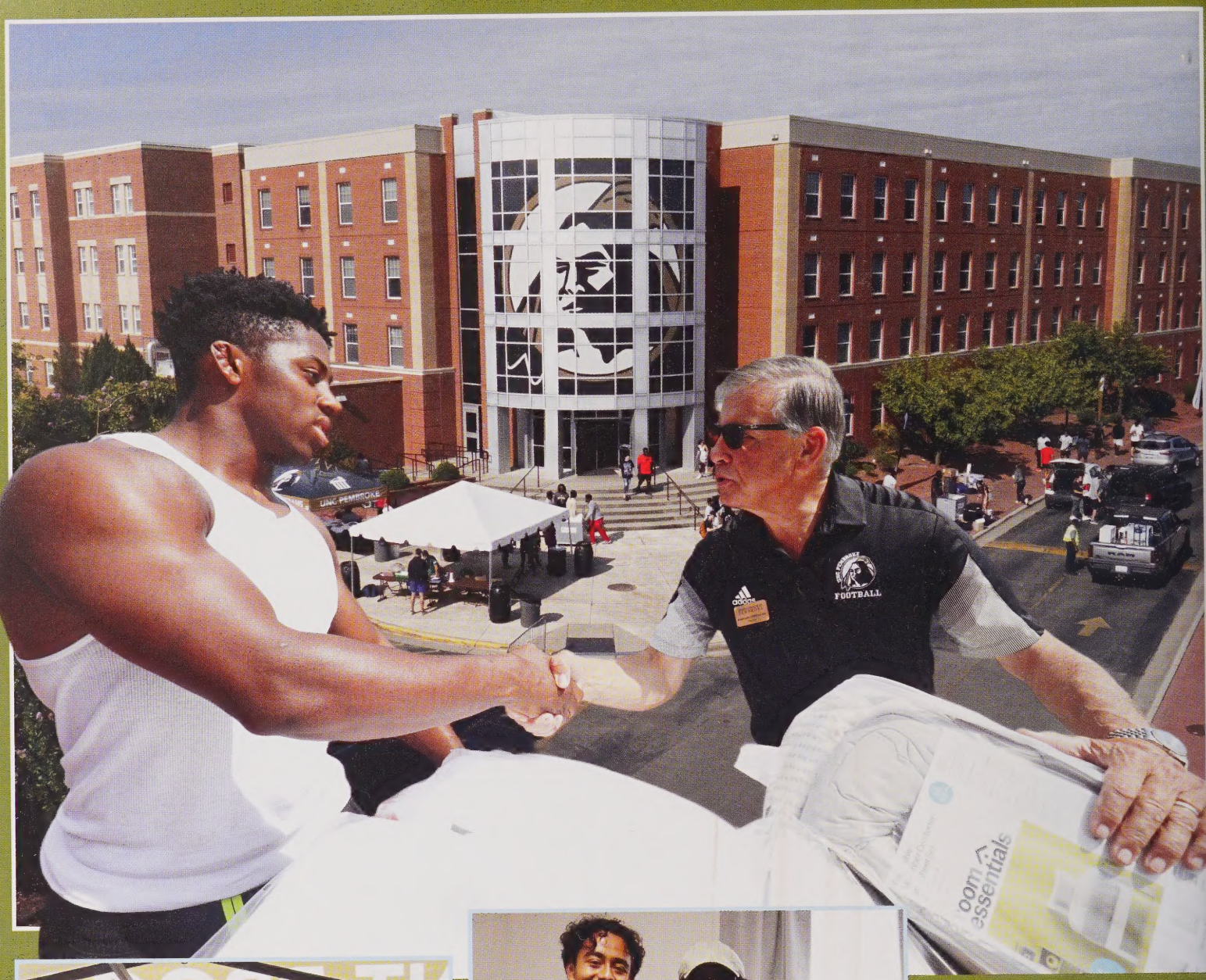
2024

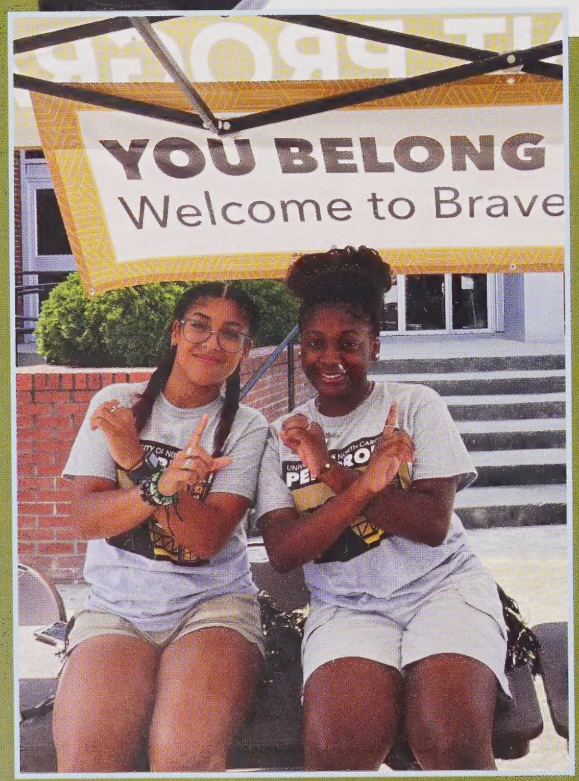
FALL

Crisp leaves tumble, gold and bright, cool winds dance in fading light. Sweaters warm, the air is sweet, pumpkin spice and earth beneath. Autumn whispers, soft and slow, a fleeting fire before the snow. New friendships form and old ones extend; the start of the semester is a comforting blend.

Yet fall brought shifts both expected and unforeseen. The semester kicked off with Freshman Move-in Day, an exciting occasion when volunteers from many organizations and departments help settle-in the new students. The state-mandated dissolution of the Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity over the summer surprised students and marked the end of an era for student support. Homecoming Week brought with it fellowship and fun for returning alumni and current students, as spirited events such as the step show and parade sparked a renewed sense of community and Braves pride. Meanwhile, ongoing construction projects on campus, such as the new baseball/softball complex, reshaped spaces and temporarily closed parking lots frequently used by drivers and pedestrians.

Hurricane Helene hit western North Carolina and other areas not typically affected by coastal storms in late September, and her lingering effects across the region served as a reminder of nature's unpredictability and destructive force. The U.S. presidential election, a hard-fought battle between incumbent vice president Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump, sparked heated conversations across campus. Amid these evolving changes the season's golden embrace remained a steady presence, urging students to adapt and move forward.





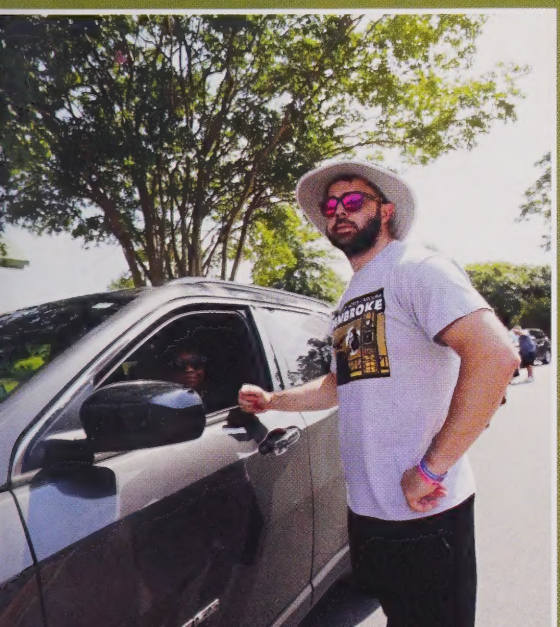
Orientation Leaders Katherine Cordova (left) and Aliya Futch.

New roommates JP Marquez and Raouf Dalsing

Newly graduated former SGA President Aspen Andersson (right) hugs sister Emelia.

Welcome Home

The Class of 2028 arrived for Freshman Move-In on Saturday, Aug. 17, buzzing with excitement. Armed with boxes, duffel bags and a squadron of parents and friends, new students took their first steps into a life of independence. Inside the residence halls, as roommates met and unpacked, new friendships were made with each other and with neighbors across the hall. **Chancellor Cummings** likes to lend a helping hand and thank the volunteers, such as wrestler **Nigel Williams** (facing page) and members of the Braves **football team** (left). Having student and staff volunteers is always an essential part of creating a smooth transition and a welcoming feeling. Last-minute advising for classes was offered all day, followed by small-group dinners with student leaders.



Myrical Tucker's family helps her get a handle on all the sweatshirts she packed.

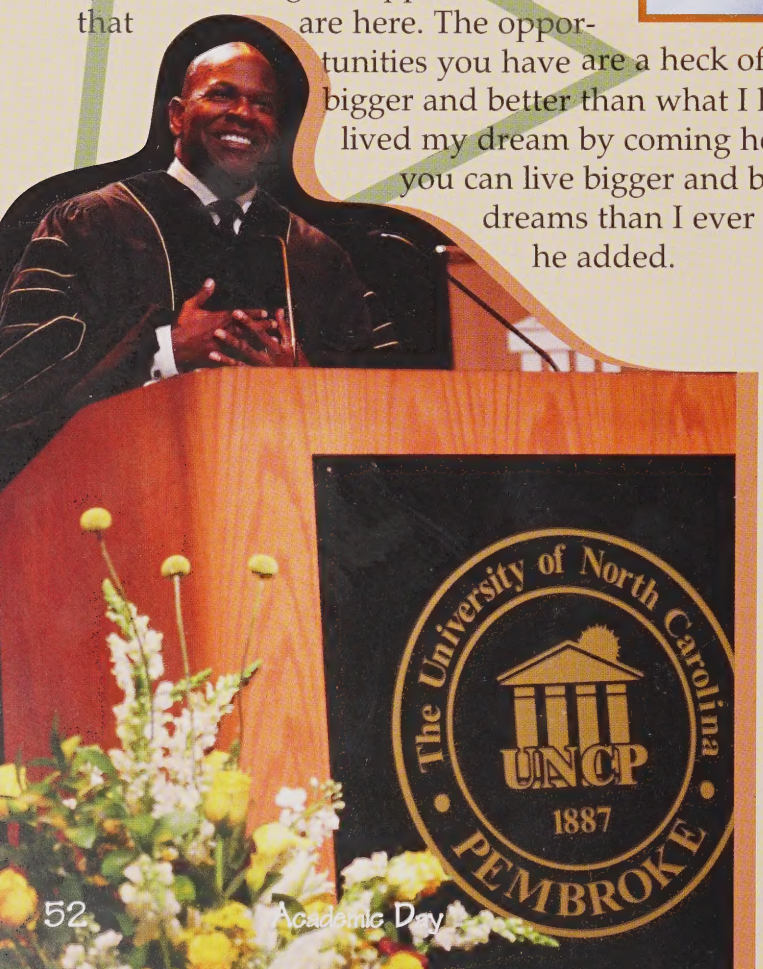
Left: Assistant Director for Campus Engagement Daniel Perdue scopes out where to send vehicles in need of unloading.

Convocation

On Aug. 19 freshmen embarked on Academic Day, an occasion to provide new students with crucial information about various resources, expectations and opportunities. They learned that time management and project planning, as well as making introductions to faculty and staff, are key components in getting off to a great start at UNCP.

As part of the occasion, students such as **Riya Neupane, Shaynne Dimpas** and **Jebish Bhattarai Khatri** (right), made their way to GPAC for the ceremony known as Convocation.

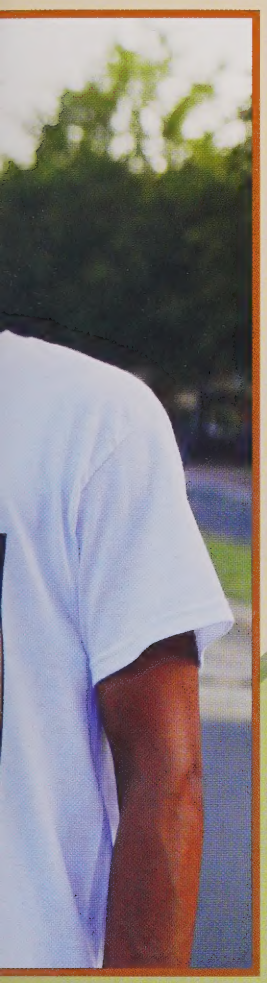
This year we were honored to have **Newy Scruggs**, UNCP alumnus and Emmy Award-winning sports broadcaster, as the motivational speaker. "Everything that I have as a grown man came because of the education and experiences I received at this university," Scruggs said. "Take advantage of opportunities that are here. The opportunities you have are a heck of a lot bigger and better than what I had. I've lived my dream by coming here, and you can live bigger and better dreams than I ever did," he added.

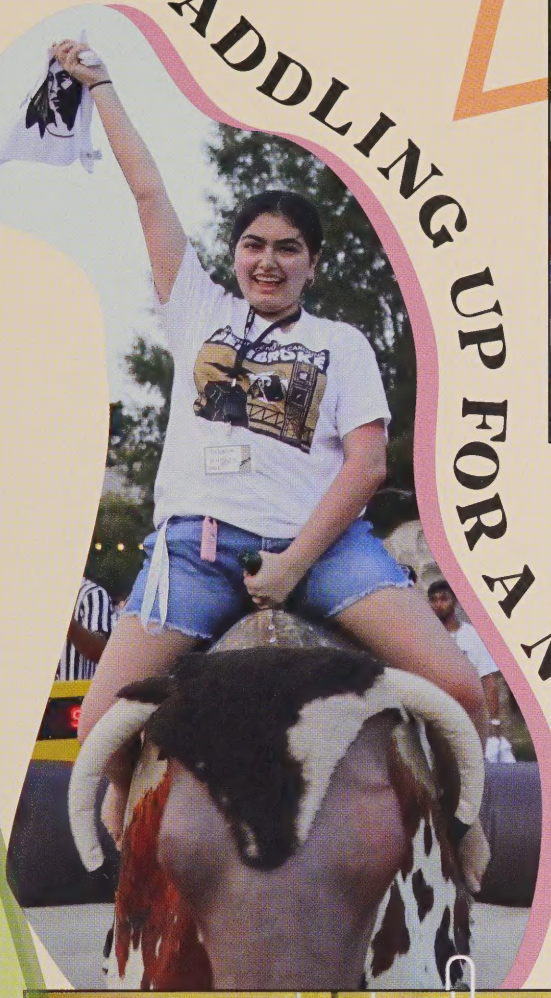


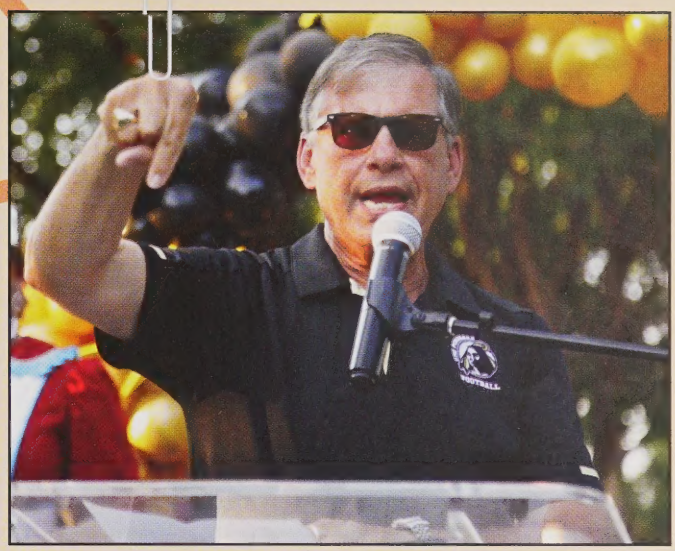
Alumnus Newy Scruggs, who majored in broadcasting back when the school was still known as Pembroke State University, addresses the incoming freshmen.

The 2024 Lumbee Ambassadors lead the flute processional that brings the chancellor and faculty into the auditorium at GPAC for Convocation.

SADDLING UP FOR A NEW SEMESTER





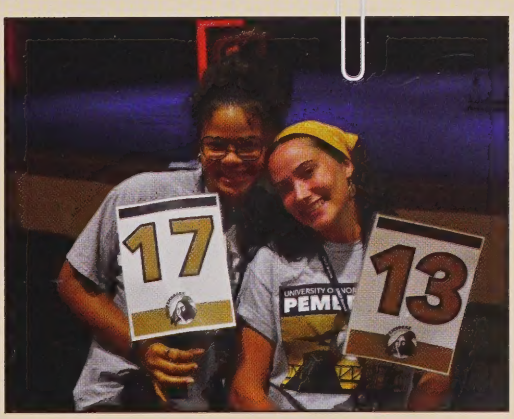


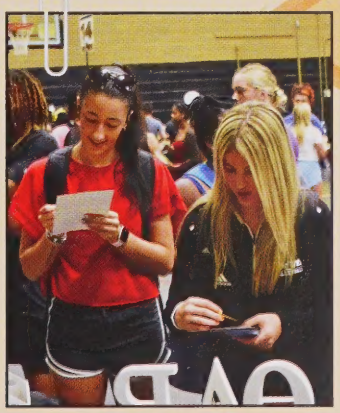
Chancellor Cummings delivers an empowering message to the new students before they start their Freshman Walk to GPAC for Convocation.

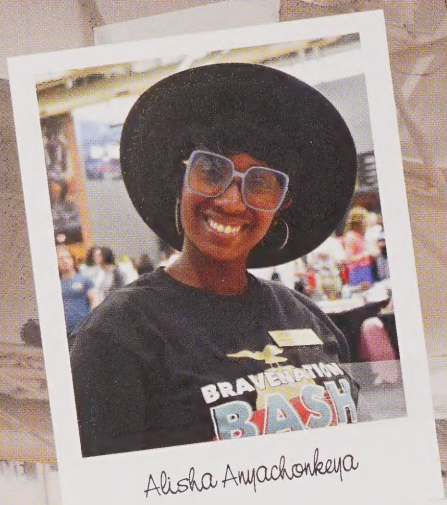
Above: Isabella Hughes rides a mechanical bull during the evening events called FLIGHT after a day full of academics.

Left: Caylee Gilbert is among those who are greeted by HCAP, the Heath Careers Access Program, who showcased their resources to the interested newcomers.

Left to right: Students Harmony Somerville and Hannah Scrattish await first-year students to assist them with the day's itinerary and lead them to the right locations. Chloe Painter and Sicily Fontaine learn about campus resources during the "resource expedition." Chanelle Lott and Judaea Soles look over flyers about the Center for Student Success.







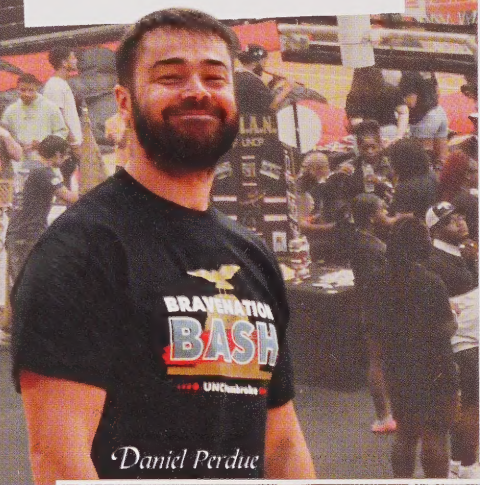
Alisha Anyachonkeya

Ariana Orendine

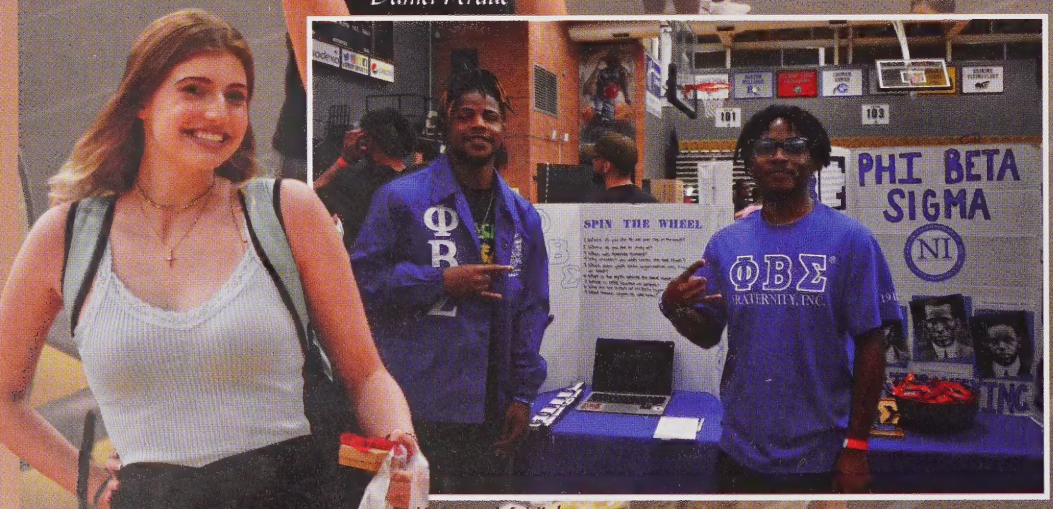
"BraveNation Bash is an event where you can learn about various clubs, sororities, and fraternities, you can hang out and play various games with your friends, and the event is perfect for freshmen to learn about how events are structured at this school."

-Sophomore Isaac Nixon

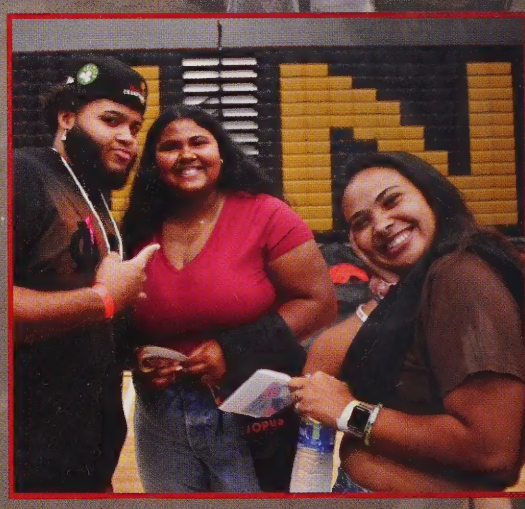
Kylie Brown and Cailynn Fontaine



Daniel Perdue



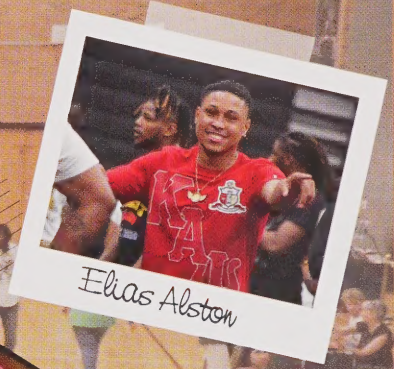
Kristen McVickers



Student Affairs employees Sam Hauser and Hope Merritt pose for the caricature artist.

Left to right: Gloriest Lubamba, Synara Peterson and Katie Crossgrove take part in the line dancing.

Andrea Guzman



Elias Alston

All Greek Council:
Tkaii Gaither, Leadership and Education
Lydia Mansfield, Community Building
Jude Ayres, Health and Wellness
Bruce Morton, Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life
Kendra Tompkins, Service and Philanthropy
Janiel Mercado-Vazquez, Communications and Marketing

Meet the

Every year at the beginning of fall semester, Greek Life hosts an event to "Meet the Greeks." This is where students who are interested in the sororities and fraternities at Pembroke can get some more information on them. Each group has their own time on stage to introduce themselves and share a few important facts about their chapter. Many will share a dance or performance that is specific to their group. They also share a bit of their philanthropy and how they serve their community. After each group introduces themselves, interested newcomers and all the Greeks step outside GPAC to represent themselves. Here students can get more detailed information and one-on-one conversation with the members.

During this time some of the sororities and fraternities continue performances known as "strolling." Sometimes they battle each other. This event is always full of great energy and fun activities. Any students who are considering Greek life should make sure to keep this occasion on their 'Ya Had to Be There' event list.

The Kappa Delta sisterhood stands at their information table.
Alpha Kappa Alpha remember to hold their pinkies high.
Omega Psi Phi show off their signs.
Trenton Brown is "DJ MUD" for the event.

Greeks!

Sigma Gamma Rho sorority makes the audience gasp with their on-stage performance.

Tau Kappa Epsilon gathers together at their table at Givens Performing Arts Center.

The women of Zeta Tau Alpha urge us to "Think Pink."

The men of Phi Mu Alpha showed us their musical talent during presentations. Alpha Pi Omega "Beta Bees" perform a traditional Native dance (above left).

Kappa Alpha Psi Elias Alston throws up a heart to the camera while strolling.

The men of Phi Sigma Nu pose at their table inviting new members.

PEMBROKE

Originally scheduled for an earlier date, the 34th Annual Pembroke Day was postponed because of rain but returned in full force on Oct. 3, a Thursday afternoon. The campus Quad buzzed with excitement as students, faculty, local businesses and other community members came together to celebrate this beloved tradition.

Campus clubs and university departments set up booths to recruit new members and raise funds. **Natalie Belcourt** (below) represents SGA and Teaching Fellows at the same time, while the Biology Club catches the eye of freshman **Elino Jennings** (below right). Local vendors attracted crowds with free promotional items. Live entertainment, including performances by the Spirit of the Carolinas marching band, UNCP Concert Band and Pembroke Singers kept the energy high. Free health screenings and vaccinations from regional providers made the event both fun and beneficial.

Artisans from around the region sold their wares, and catering was provided by Sodexo.

Malcolm Gray receives a plate full of whipped cream. NICE WORK, Tiana Lowry!

Above, left to right: Rachel Moore and Beverly Brooks table for Scotland Health Care System, a proud partner of UNCP.

DAY

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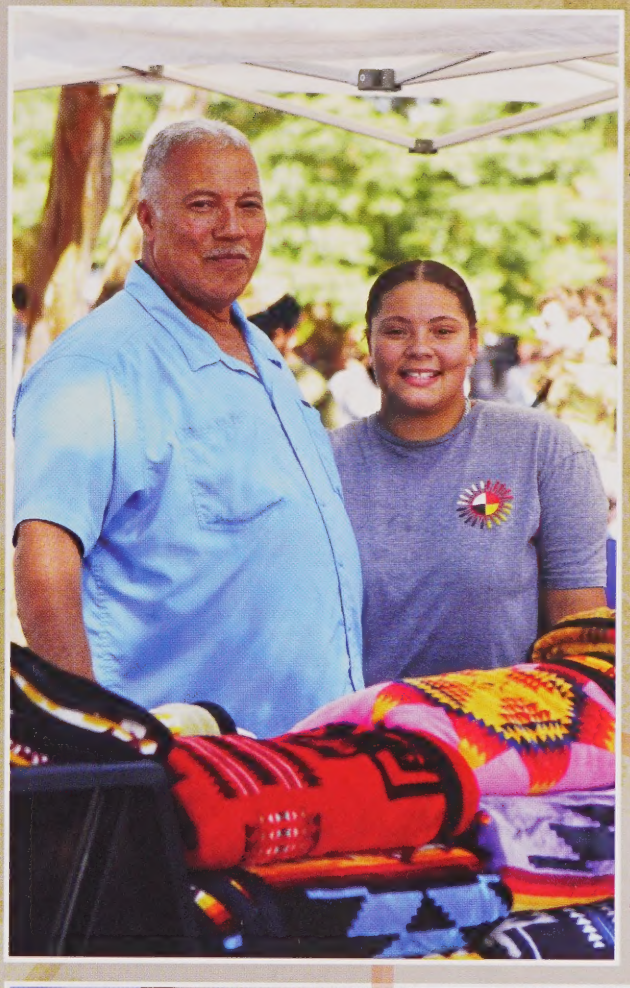
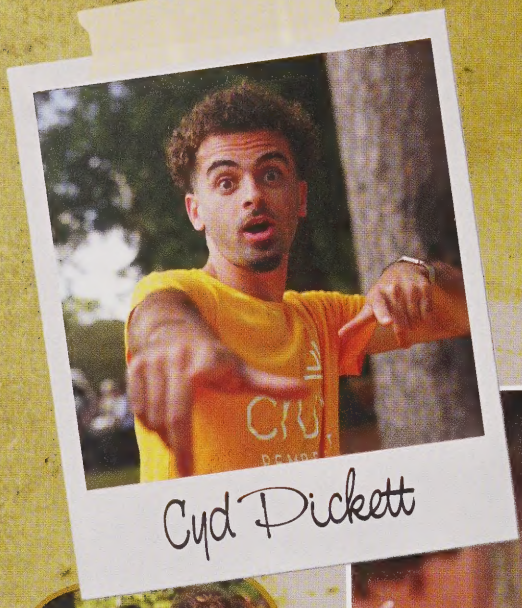


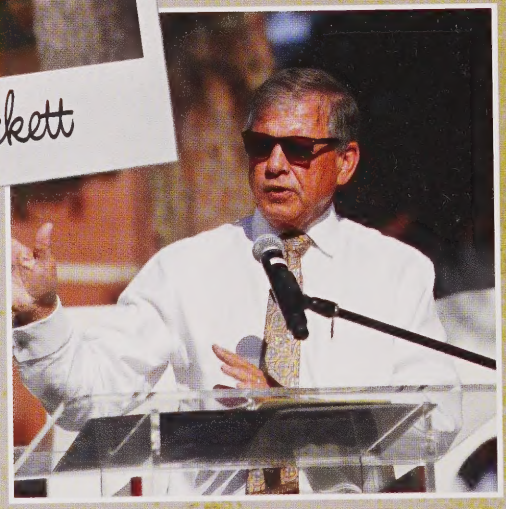
From blankets and hand-made earrings, to digitally-designed stickers that student Katarina Lee (far left) crafts herself, the shopping on Pembroke Day allows many members of the community to publicly represent their talents.

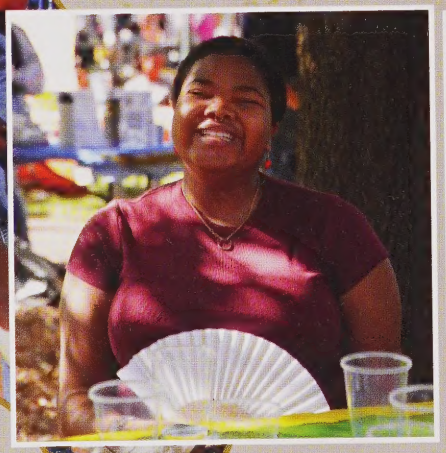
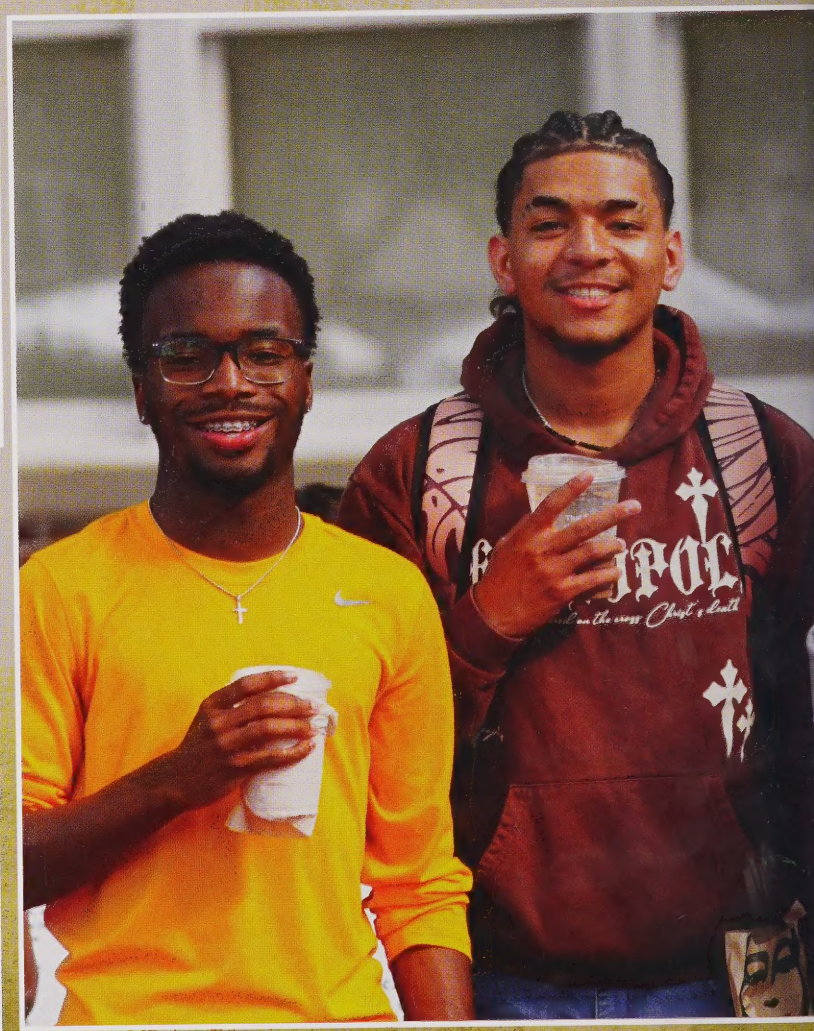
Below, left to right: Kylie Cummings, Isabel Huggins and Ariel Locklear are repping their Braves apparel.

ONE DOGGONE GOOD TIME!

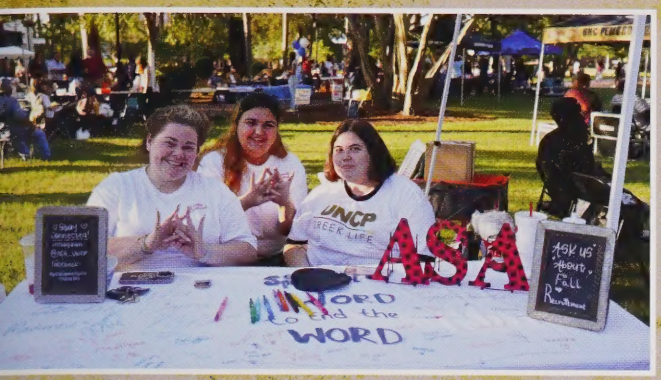
Anna Frick enjoys the Pembroke Day weather with her golden doodle, Titan.

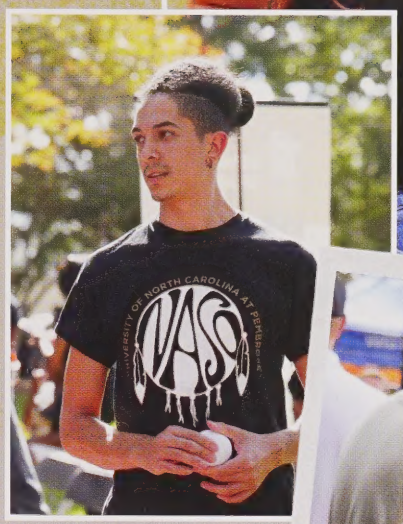

Cyd Pickett



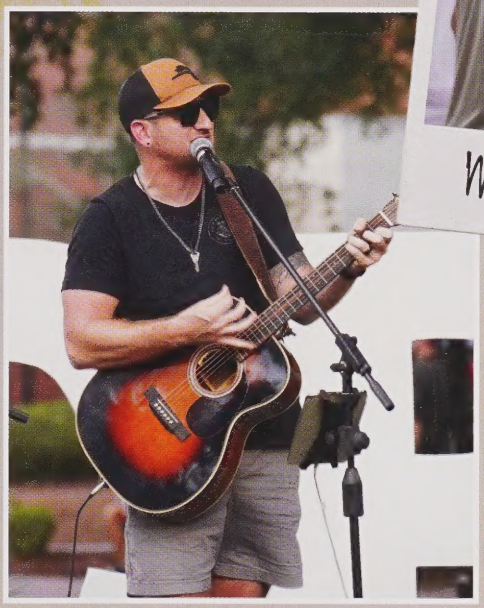



Isatou Tambajang





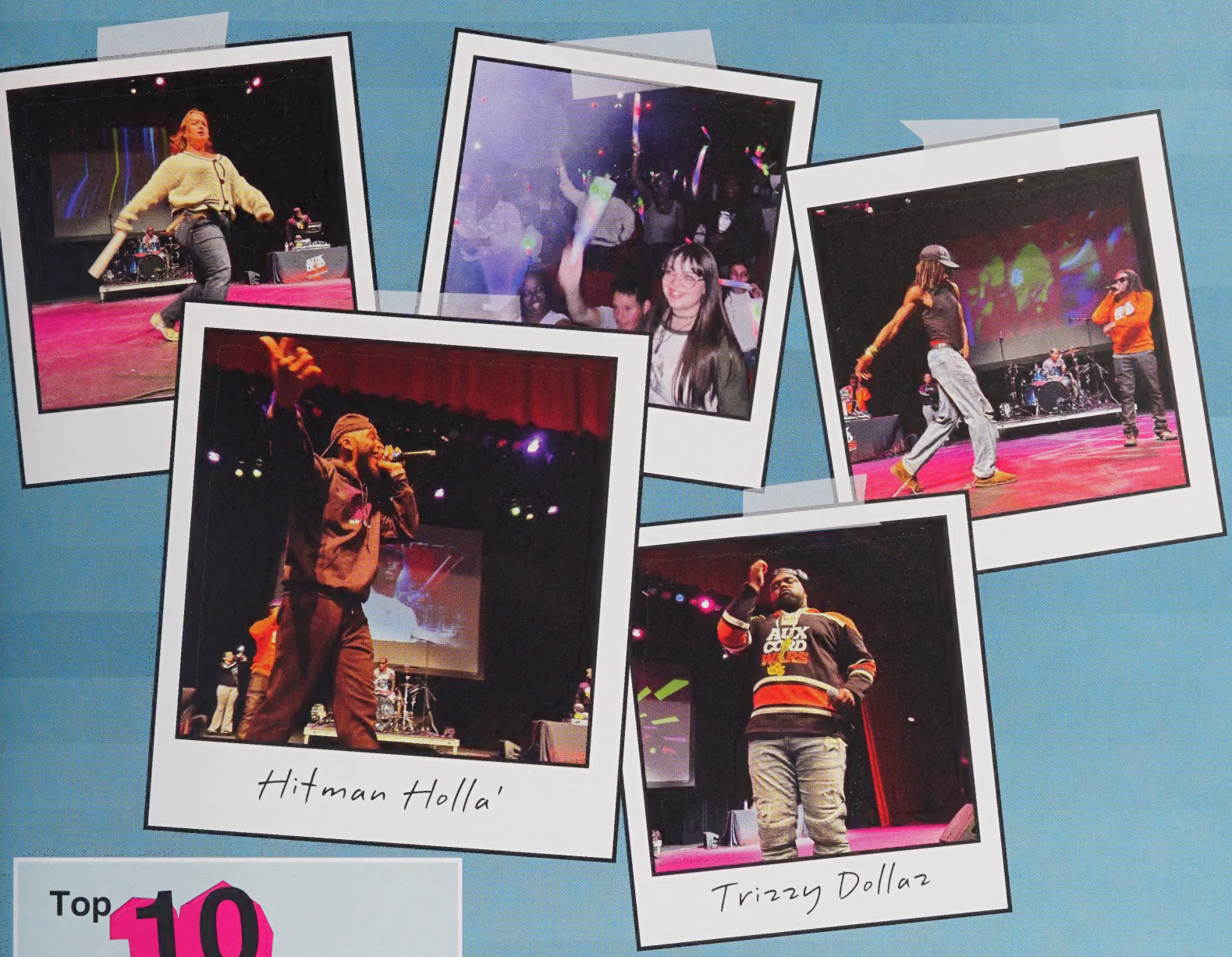
Monica Hall



Rob Cole, a local singer who was on Season 25 of "The Voice" made an appearance on the stage at Pembroke Day. He set the tone for a fun, sunshine-filled afternoon.

Can I get the aux?

Aux Cord Wars on Oct. 21 was a night full of energy, competition and great music as students battled to see who had the best song picks. The event kicked off with a game of Kahoot, where the winner took home $50, before diving into three exciting rounds of song challenges. In each round, two people from the crowd had to come up with at least three songs that fit the chosen category—Hits of the Decade (2010s), Toxic Anthems, and Pop & Female Anthems. The real showstopper of the night was a surprise appearance from Hitman Holla' of the TV show "Wild 'n Out," sending the crowd into a frenzy. Every time a song hit just right, the energy soared, but when a pick flopped, the silence was brutal. Winners walked away with cash or Bluetooth speakers, making the competition even more intense.



Hitman Holla'

Trizzy Dollaz

Top 10 Songs

1. *Nice for What - Drake*
2. *Bad and Boujee - Migos*
3. *Moment for Life - Nicki Minaj*
4. *Boo'd Up - Ella Mai*
5. *No Love - SZA*
6. *The Weekend - SZA*
7. *Take Your Man - City Girls*
8. *Strip that Down - Liam Payne*
9. *My Type - City Girls*
10. *Love - Keyshia Cole*

Rebecca Sexton wants the crowd to applaud her selection.

The Homecoming Parade was the place to be on Thursday afternoon Oct. 24. Spectators on West Third Street and on Faculty Row were proud to say they're Braves fans. Clubs, SGA and student-athletes were featured prominently, in addition to local marching bands and JROTC.

Kaloni Walton enjoys line dancing at the booth hosted by the Center for Student Success.

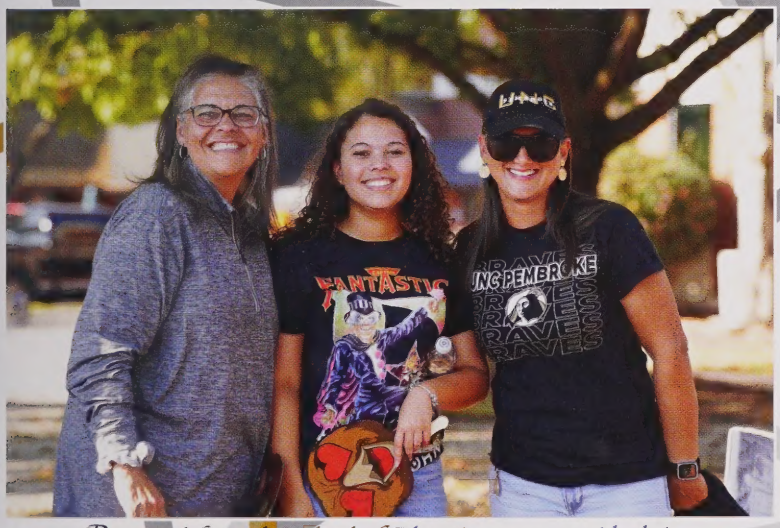
Jake Piccirilli and Ryan Walker chant for the wrestling team.

Students rep a variety of UNCP swag while riding their float.

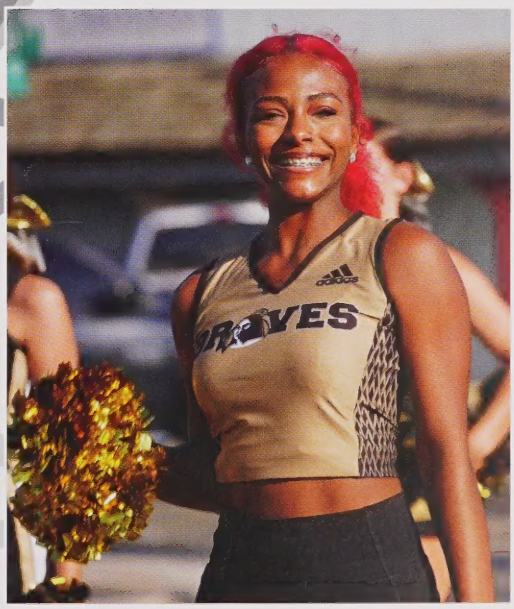
Anesu Mavhiya and Ailey Abudayya wave from atop the 1887 Society float.

First Lady and Chancellor Cummings ride an elaborate float through Pembroke.

HOCO



Personnel from the School of Education came outside their building to show their school spirit.

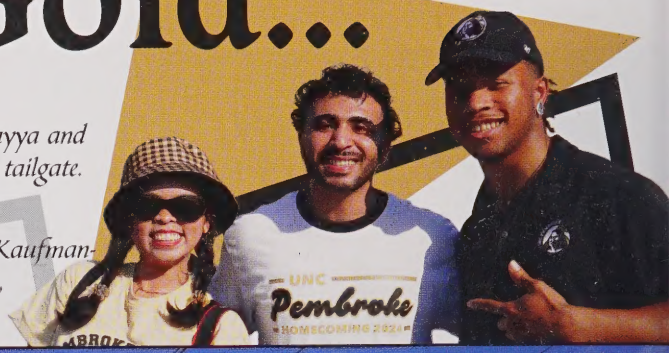


Ashia Tatem dances with the Spirit Squad on the Pembroke parade route.

Photos Credit: Hannah Scrattish

Black and Gold...

Shaynne Dimpas, Auley Abudayya and Alaqua Jacobs hang out for the tailgate.

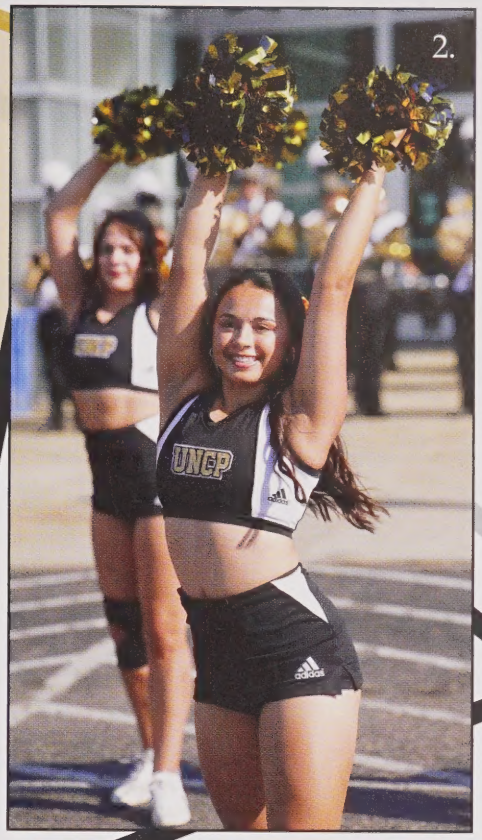


Below: Cynthia Payne, Kacie Kaufman-Craig, Mackenzie Wrightington, Cynthia Popular

A mix of students and alumni meet to tailgate, including Scott Joll, Caleb Grau, Julia Hull, Kenzi Seliga and Madison Schwenneker, who now works as an AmeriCorps VISTA out of the Office of Leadership, Learning and Community.

1) Phi Mu Alpha 2) Blair Higley 3) Aaliyah Pamplin 4) Alpha Kappa Alpha

1.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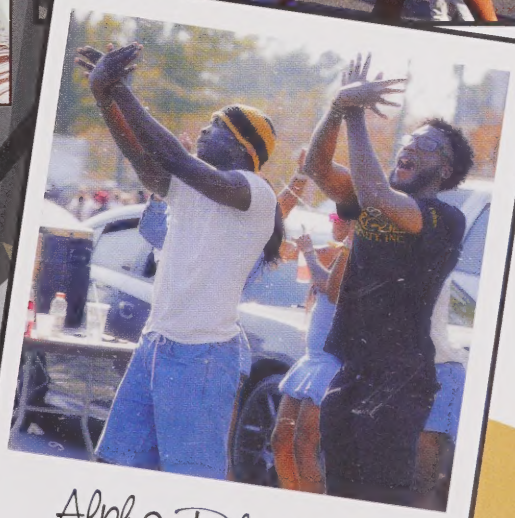
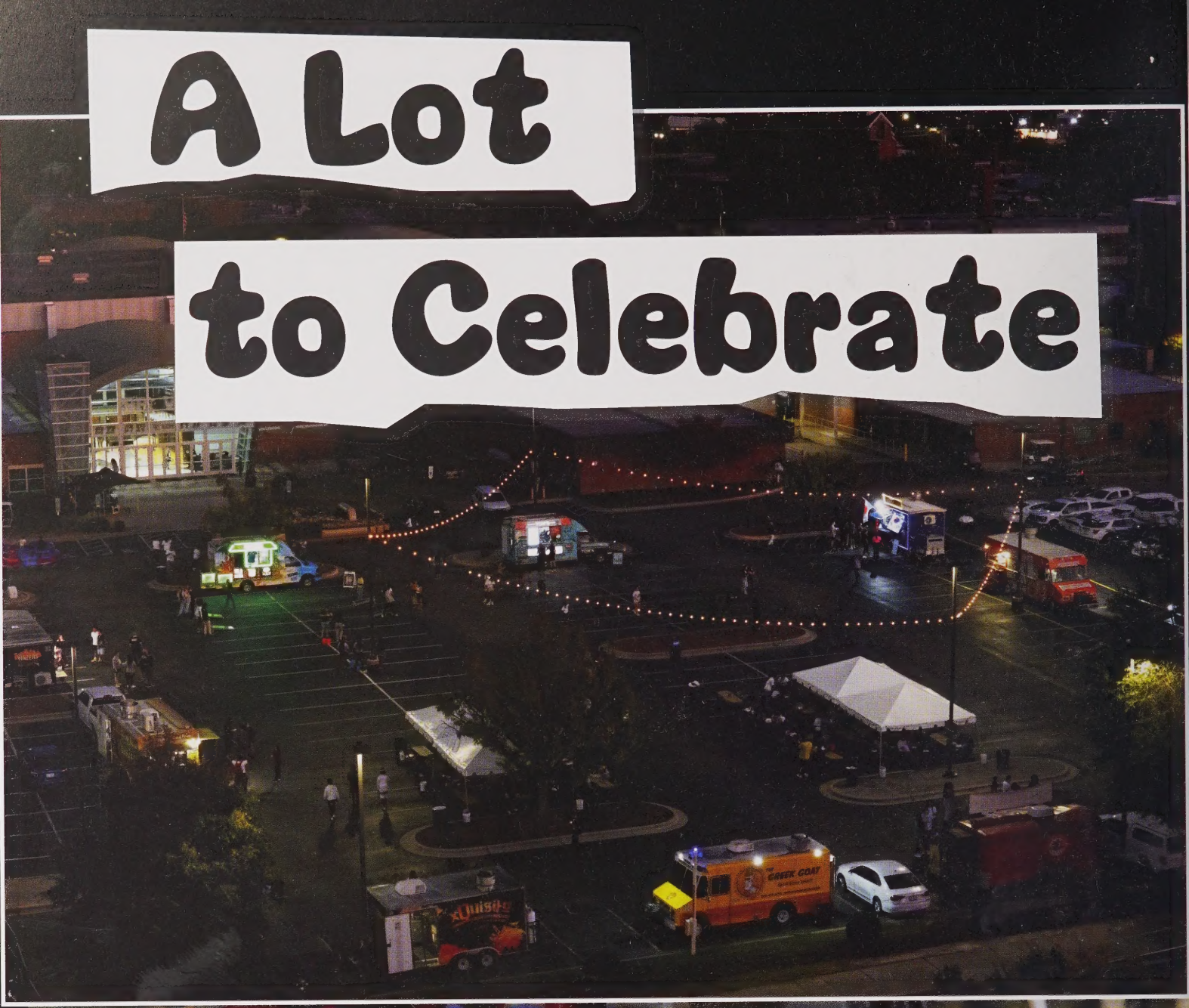


Alpha Phi Alpha

Tailgating before heading into the stadium for the Homecoming football game is a time-honored tradition for alumni and current students. Festivities started early on Oct. 26 when a variety of departments and Greek organizations set up their tents, grills and games to welcome out-of-towners for the matchup against West Virginia State University. We should have been tired from a week of events like PAC the Patio, Aux Cord Wars, the parade, Moonlight Madness, and comedian Tim Shropshire at GPAC, but we still had energy for the 62-17 Braves win and the NPHC Step Show that night.

...Float on Forever

A Lot to Celebrate



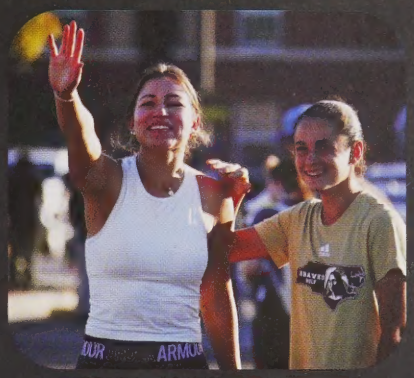
The Kona Ice truck was popular in the heat, even as the sun went down. Right: Golfers Michelle Guerra Landa and Marta Ortega play a round of cornhole.

Students could sample Korean and Middle Eastern food, but there was also a traditional taco truck. Right: Senior mass comm major Gemmaury Edison gets a hug from her friend Kyle.

The golf team found themselves playing cornhole in a sunny spot, and the cheerleaders were able to grab some dinner before heading inside to inspire the fans during the basketball intrasquad scrimmages.

There were places to sit, eat and relax with some shade, but the inflatable obstacle course (right) and inflatable slides were also an attraction for kids and grownups alike.

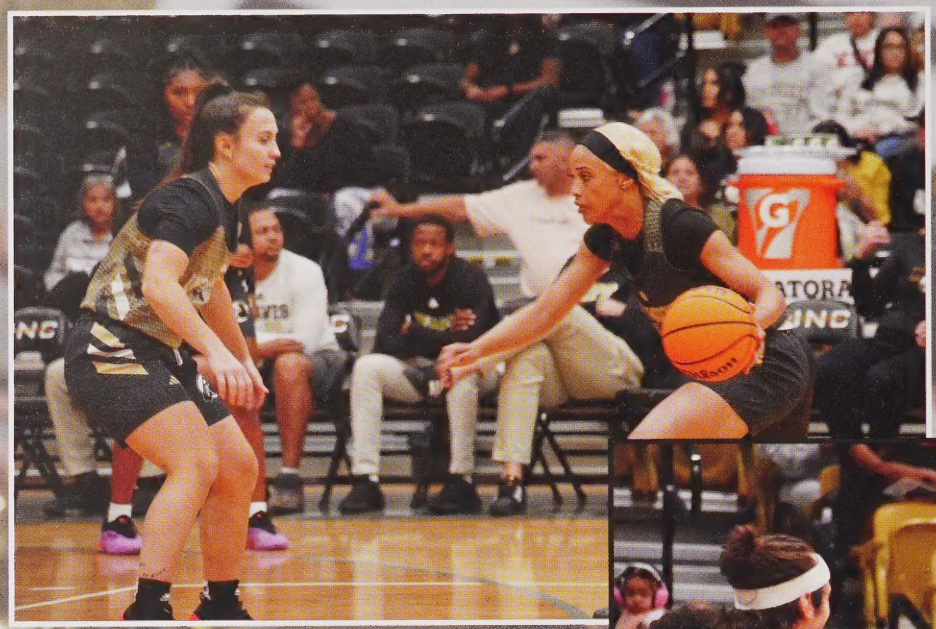
Friendly Faces



The Beats 'N Eats party in the Jones Center parking lot after the Homecoming parade replaced a bonfire this year. Everyone who stuck around after the parade could buy something to eat from food trucks to get fed before Moonlight Madness. DJ Mud helped students make memories, one track at a time.

SHOOT FOR THE MOON!

1



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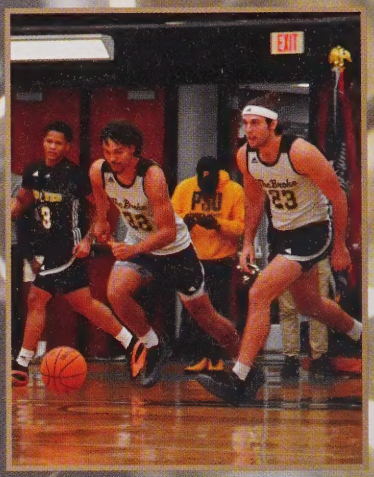

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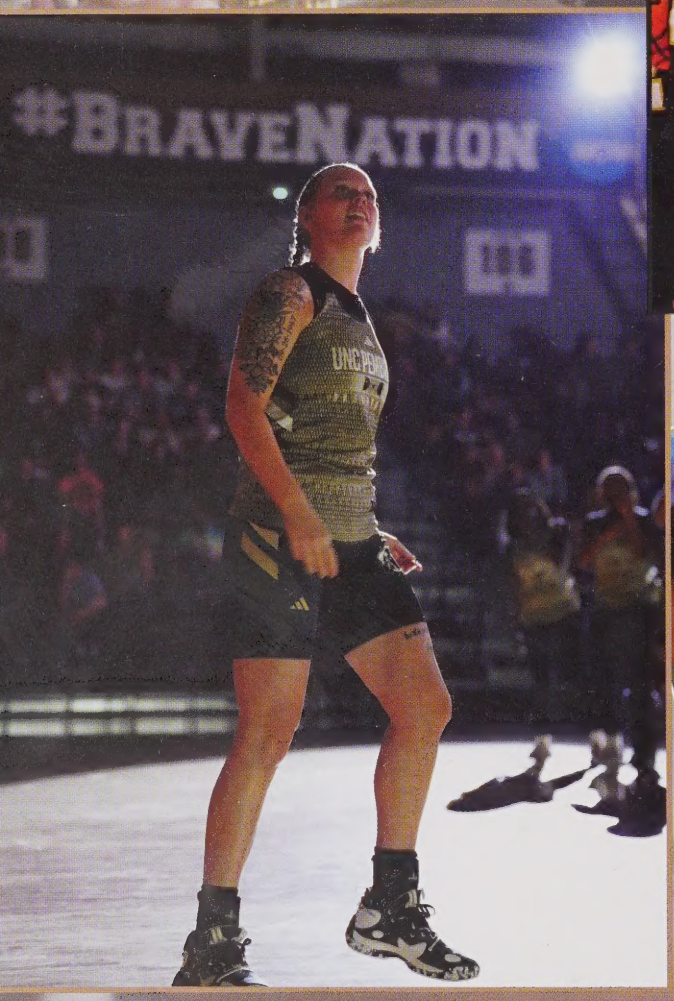

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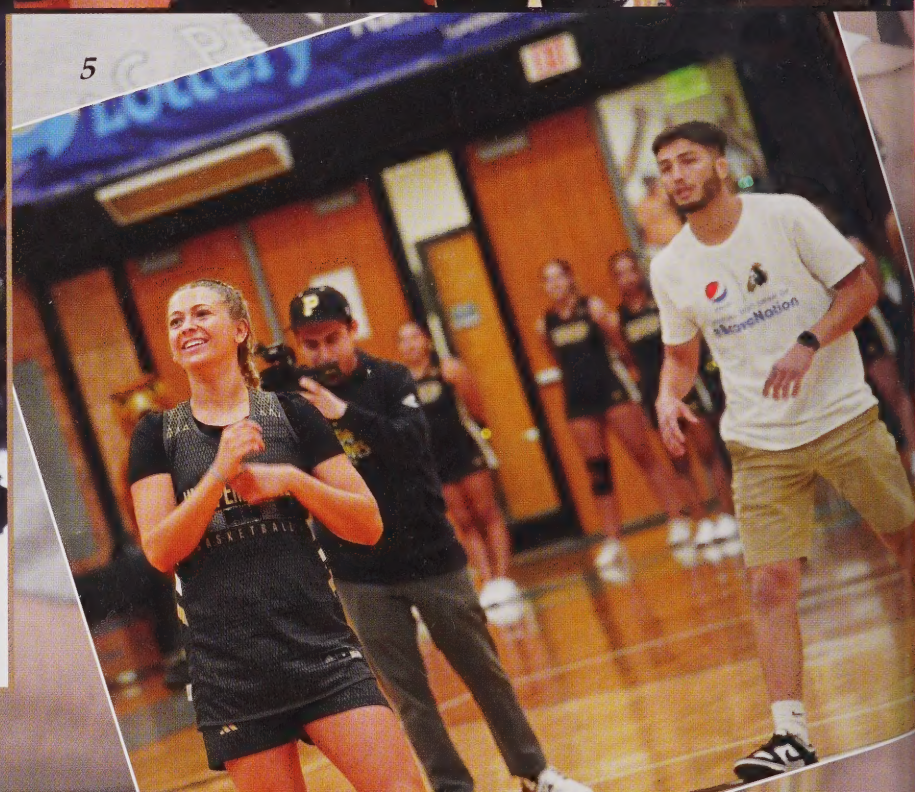


Braves fans gathered at Lumbee Guaranty Bank Court on Oct. 24 for Moonlight Madness, a homecoming tradition. The women's and men's basketball teams played intrasquad scrimmages. For the women's game, Gold defeated Black 21-16, and for the men's game, Black defeated Gold 38-30. Peyton Mann won the dunk contest, and Kelci Adams won the 3-point contest. Student Jake Piccirilli won the student knockout game.

6

9

8

7

1) Stella Mollica and DeNaira Williams (2) Steven Lassiter and Josh Berenbaum (3) Peyton Mann (4) Hannah Russell (5) Kelci Adams and Jake Piccirilli (6) Haleigh Dial and Synara Peterson (7) Alyssa Branch (8) Michael Flowers (9) Joe'l Pettiford and Jonathan Kurtis

Fought hard, finished strong

The Braves football program found itself in an unexpected position, with a four-game losing streak starting the season, after being picked to finish second in the Mountain East Conference. They had tough losses in late-game situations against Wingate University and the Fayetteville State Broncos, who reclaimed the Two Rivers Classic Cup. Injuries also hindered the Braves, most notably quarterback Colin Johnson's broken foot on the first play of the season.

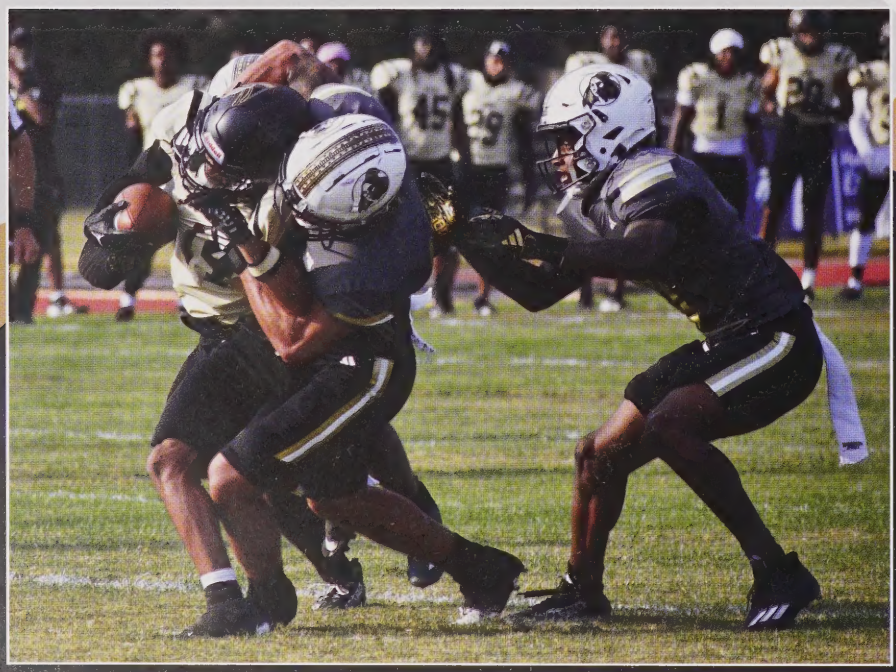
Making the return home after spending about a month on the road that finally resulted in a win against Wheeling, the Braves looked like their old selves in a dominating win over West Liberty on Oct. 12. They broke the school record for most offensive yards in a game and the most touchdowns in a single game with 10.

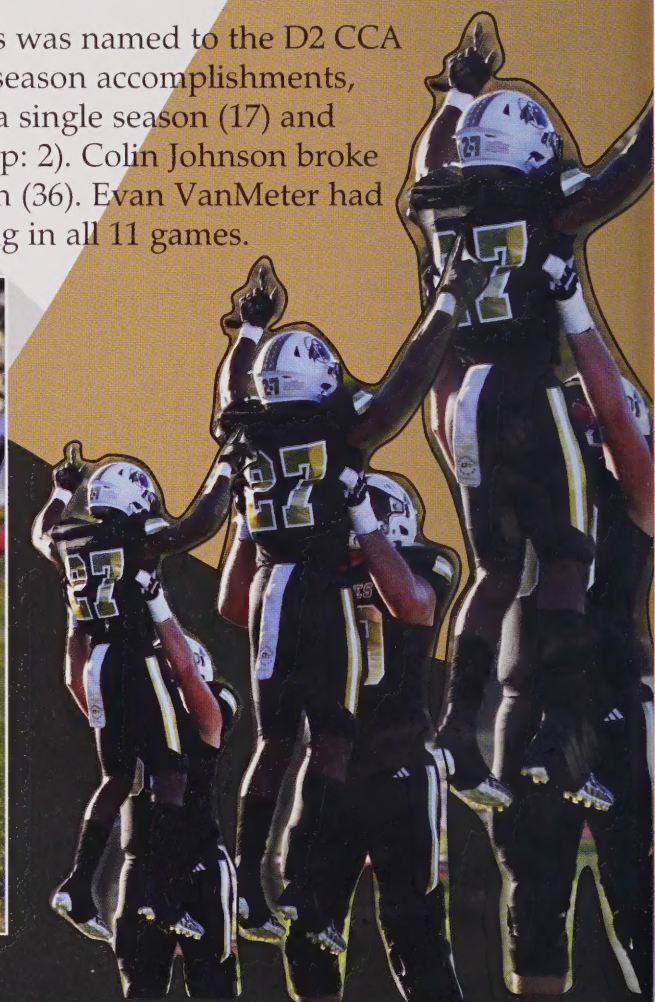
Despite keeping Fairmont State to two field goals in the second half, the Braves lost their next game on the road. They regained their momentum and went on a crushing win streak, including a more-than-comfortable win against West Virginia State, 62-17, to thrill the fans for Homecoming on Oct. 26.

Records continued to fall as the Braves flipped a 2-5 record to a 6-5 record to end the season. In a 79-20 home win over West Virginia Wesleyan on American Indian Heritage Day, the team broke the school record for most points scored in the first half (56) and then topped the scoring record with most points in a game (79). Caleb Locklear made history, marking the first time a Native American has started at quarterback for the Braves, and earned a touchdown when he returned in the fourth quarter.

In the final game of the season on Nov. 16 in Athens, West Virginia, the Braves beat Concord 63-7, which helped Mark Hall become the first coach in the history of the program to go .500 or better in his first two seasons at the helm. In the win the Braves also finished with a season-best 619 yards of total offense.

UNCP sent 13 players to All-Conference, and Jo Hayes was named to the D2 CCA All-Region and AFCA All-America Teams to close out his season accomplishments, which include a new record for receiving touchdowns in a single season (17) and membership in the 1,000 receiving-yards club (membership: 2). Colin Johnson broke the Braves' record for touchdown passes in a single season (36). Evan VanMeter had a team-best 44 solo tackles and 62 total tackles after playing in all 11 games.





Quarterback Colin Johnson rolls out against Frostburg State.

Diaz Alexander and Jo Hayes celebrate Hayes' touchdown with a handshake.

Jamae Blank can taste the victory after his fourth quarter touchdown against Frostburg State.

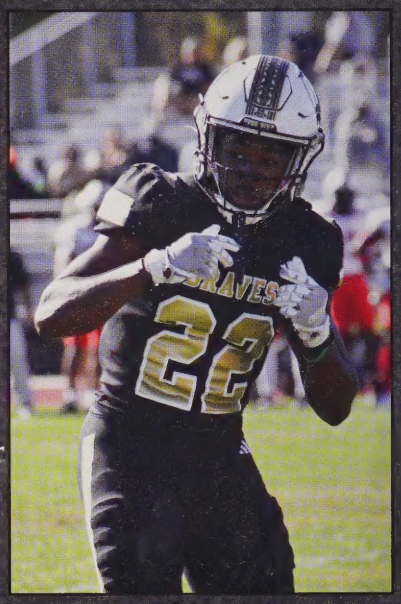
SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
12	Wingate	17
31	Fayetteville St.	35
36	Charleston	58
7	Glenville St.	14
35	Wheeling	32
67	West Liberty	20
28	Fairmont St.	37
62	W. Virginia State	17
79	W. Va. Wesleyan	20
58	Frostburg St.	17
63	Concord	7

#20 Marquis Raspberry, #0 Carlo Thompson, #15 Evan VanMeter, #29 Sincere Baines

Photos Credit: Hannah Scrattish

Josiah Hayes, also known as Jo, is a graduate student from Peanut City, Virginia, who earned his bachelor's degree in mass communications here after transferring from Elizabeth City State University. Jo played two seasons with Braves football and racked up accolades in his final season, including being named to the American Football Coaches Association All-America Second Team, only the second player in the program's history to receive this honor. With 17 touchdown receptions, he broke the school's single-season record and is the second player in Braves' history to record more than 1,000 receiving yards in a season. Of his time with the Braves he said, "It's been great. It has its ups and downs, but everything happens for a reason. I wouldn't change it for anything."



Jo enjoys spending time with his family and friends as well as giving back to his community. He spends a great portion of his time interacting with youth by training kids through a mentorship program. He started his own non-profit called The Stacking Dayz Foundation that runs youth football camps that focus on developing both life skills and football skills. "I enjoy helping kids go down the right path and helping them see and reach their full potential," he said. Last year as a senior he won UNCP's first BraveHawk Entrepreneur Challenge and $1,000 when he pitched his idea for an expanded "Stacking Dayz Initiative."

Currently working on his MBA, Jo says he recognizes the increasing shift toward a digital world and views the related skills as valuable for navigating ongoing changes and advancements. "I wanted to be with the times and have an opportunity to do something meaningful after I graduate," he said. He intends to continue his philanthropic work impacting his community through his non-profit organization.

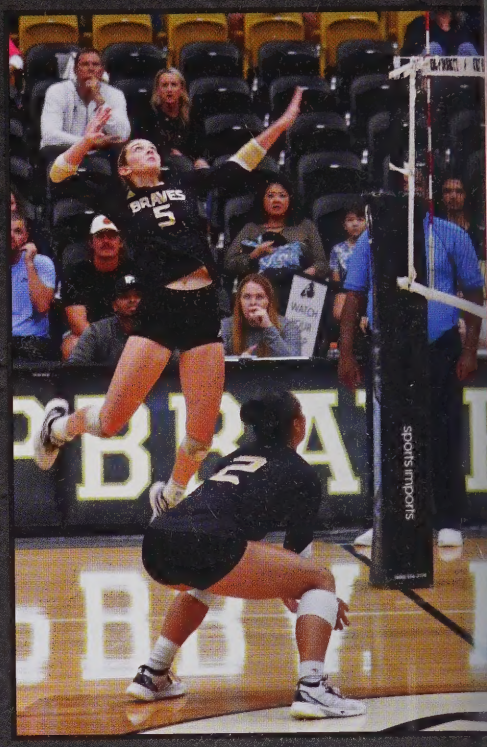
Jo said he has met many genuine people at UNCP whom he'll miss, however, the ones he will miss the most are the teammates and friends who he has connected with the most through football. His advice to freshmen would be to "not miss any of the events, especially the sporting events, and get to know people. Do not stay cooped up in your room; make friends. It's a big community here." He added, "Always give thanks, through it all."

--Profiled by Jalayna Pough

SENIORS

BRAVES
BRAVES
BRAVES

From northern lights to a championship fight



Playing in early-season tournaments is always exciting — it's a chance to test your team's resilience with back-to-back games. But traveling to Fairbanks, Alaska, for a tournament? That's an entirely different experience. Though the results didn't go as hoped, the Braves volleyball team made the most of their business trip to Alaska. From catching the breathtaking northern lights to feeding reindeer, the Braves found joy in every moment.

Starting the season on the road is never easy. Without the comfort of a home crowd, the Braves faced numerous opponents in enemy territory. Early challenges, like injuries and tough teams, tested their resolve, but they dug deep, using those trials to sharpen their skills and grow stronger as a team.

As the regular season progressed, the Braves turned things around. They delivered clutch performances in conference play, with seven matches going to five sets — proving that giving up was never an option. The Braves ended the regular season on a high note, riding a three-game winning streak into the Conference Carolinas Tournament as the #6 seed. What followed was nothing short of a Cinderella story.

The Braves swept Shorter University, pulled off a reverse sweep to upset Francis Marion, and swept Mount Olive to advance to the Conference Championship Game for the third straight season. In that title game on Nov. 23 in North Charleston, the Braves' magical run ended when they fell to the Converse Valkyries 3-0. Precious Daley and Tyler Patterson were named to the All-Tournament Team.

The Braves finished the season 11-7 in conference play, but the season wasn't just about wins and losses — it was about standout performances and unforgettable milestones. **Tyler Patterson** (right) surpassed 1,000 career assists, setting career highs across the board and earning a spot on the Conference Carolinas All-Tournament Team alongside Abby Peduzzi, who had 367 kills. Savannah Whaley and McKenna Hayes made their marks, too, picking up Conference Freshman of the Month and Denali All-Tournament honors, respectively.

Tyler Patterson hypes up McKenna Hayes after gaining another kill for a total of 264 this season.

Brette Doile had an average of 3.69 digs per set, 447 for her entire first season as a Brave.

Top Row, left to right: Athletic Trainer Julie Day, Assistant Coach Sara Pasour, Abby Peduzzi, Tyler Patterson, Alexandria Mills, Katie Wakefield , McKenna Hayes, Katelynn Swain, Addie Decker, Ashley Hester, Savannah Whaley, Head Coach Jaleesa Harper
Bottom Row, left to right: Chloe Painter, Anaya Carter, Katelyn West, Emma Fraidenburg, Ruby Countryman, Karagyn Durco, Precious Daley, Brette Doile, Sicily Fontaine

Left: Ruby Countryman (#1) and Precious Daley (#13) go up for a block against Barton College.

Right: Anaya Carter (#8) and Katelynn Swain (#14) give the servers "sparkles" for good luck.

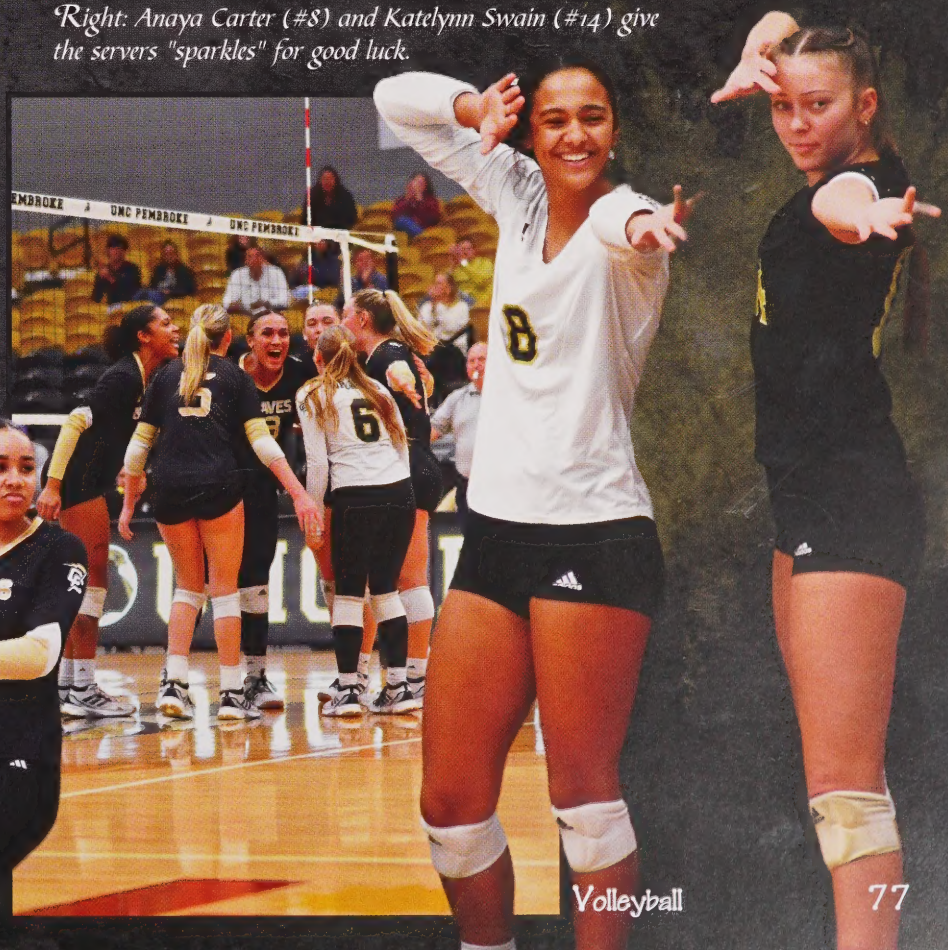
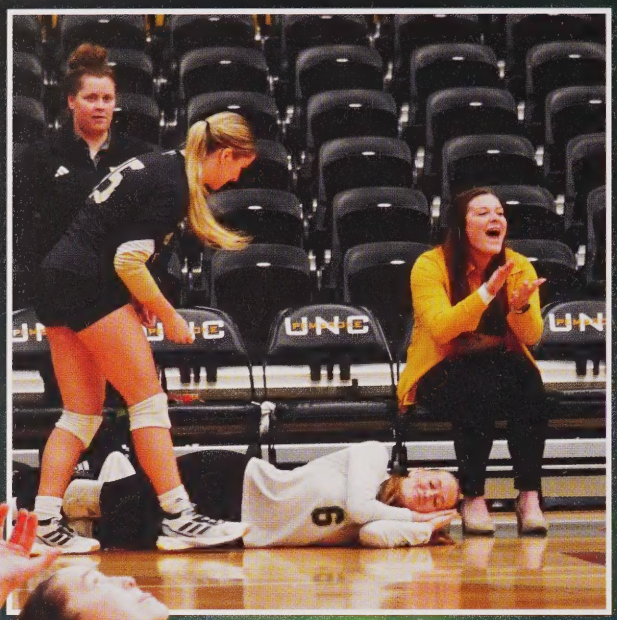


Photo Credits: Evan Phillips

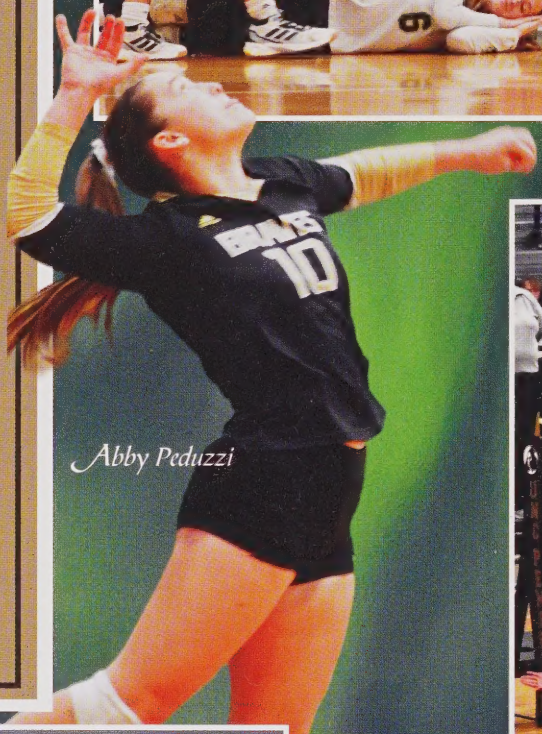
SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
0	N. Greenville	3
3	Mars Hill	2
2	Lenoir-Rhyne	3
2	Augusta	3
3	Barton	1
2	Mount Olive	3
3	Erskine	0
3	Chowan	0
3	Belmont Abbey	1
0	Francis Marion	3
3	Shorter	0
3	Young Harris Shaw	0
2	Lander	3
0	Mount Olive	3
1	S. Wesleyan	3
3	Emmanuel	0
0	Francis Marion	3
3	Lees-McRae	1
2	King	3
1	Augusta	3
3	Barton	1
3	Chowan	0
3	Converse	1
3	Shorter	0
3	Francis Marion	2
3	Mount Olive	0
0	Converse	3

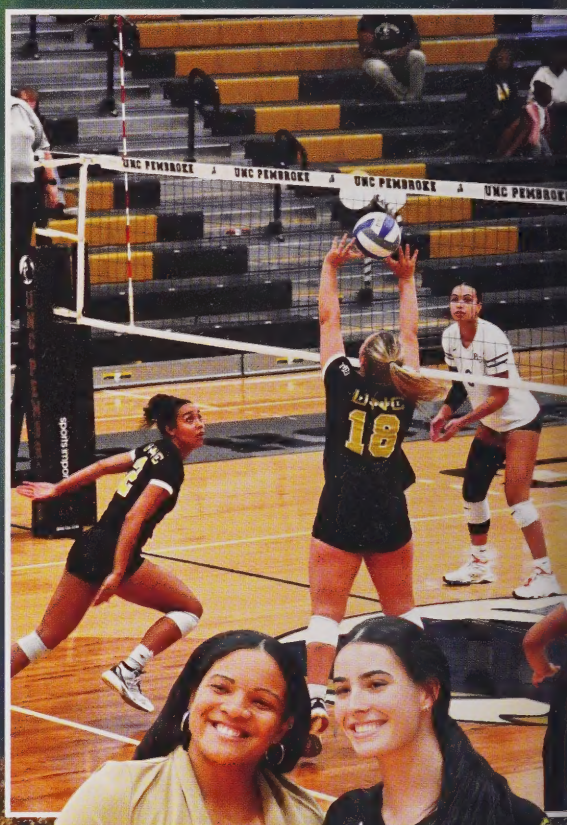


Left: Brette Doile rests up after a 3-0 win against Shorter University, while Sarah Pasour cheers in her first season as the assistant coach.

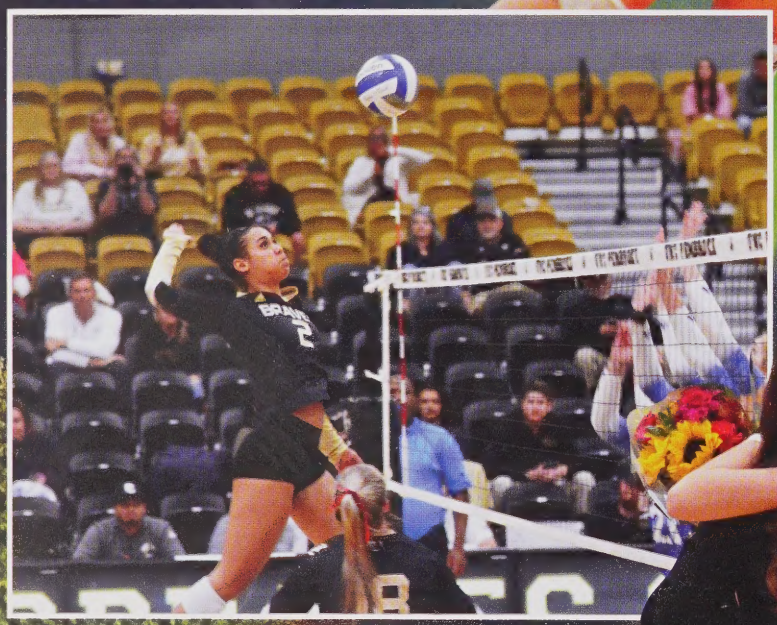
Below: Tyler Patterson sets middle McKenna Hayes in a match against Barton College.



Abby Peduzzi



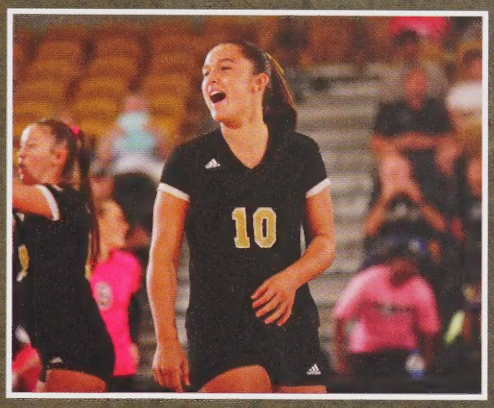
McKenna Hayes winds up for an attack against the Shorter Hawks.



Emma Fraidenburg hugs Coach Pasour on Senior Day.

Katelyn West gets a Senior Day rose from Coach Harper.

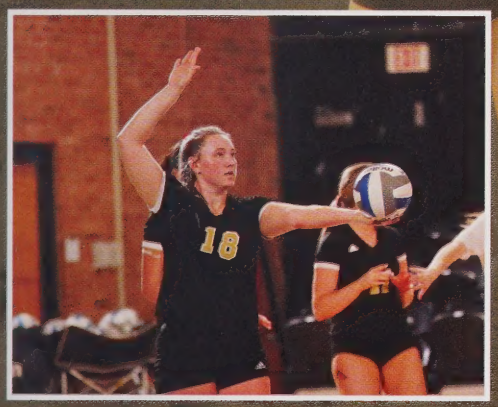
A GAMEDAY IN THE LIFE



ABBY PEDUZZI

Sophomore

07:45 a.m. - Wake up, make breakfast, and read my Bible
09:00 a.m. - Back-to-back classes: Business Law and Macroeconomics
12:15 p.m. - Lunch, watch film, and get treatment
03:30-05:00 p.m. - Warmups in the gym
06:00 p.m. - Home game vs. Augusta



TYLER PATTERSON

Sophomore

08:00 a.m. - Wake up, do my morning routine
09:30 a.m. - Breakfast and Starbucks
09:50 a.m. - Arrive at the gym
10:00 a.m. - Leave for 3-hour bus ride to Spartanburg (do homework)
03:00-06:00pm - Warmups
07:00 p.m. - Away game vs. Converse

Life is like soccer - We need GOALS

Top Row, Left to Right: Cora Taylor, Addisen Freeman, Freya Lodge Whitham, Mercy Bell, Sarah Bonifant, Shakira Kafero Roberts, Eli Söderberg, Caylee Gilbert
Bottom Row: Maya McDonald, Maria Cancio, Key'Patra Morgan, Anna Grossheim, Anna Bass, Piper Hill, Eugenie Feitosa Amidou, Reagan Carr, Ashley Wedemann, Emma Clark

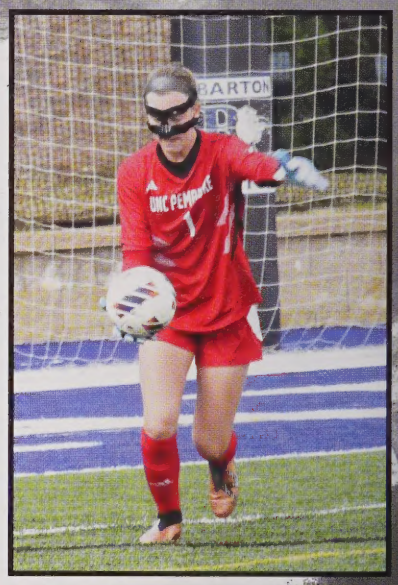
The Braves soccer team was battled-tested to start the season, with matchups against North Georgia and Lenoir-Rhyne, who both would finish the season inside the Top 25. Even though the results weren't what the Braves wanted, it prepared them for conference play.

The Braves went on to take eight wins in their next 11 matches, forcing draws in the other three. They went into the match against Wingate on Oct. 23 with both teams ranked in the regional Top 10, but the Bulldogs found the winning goal in the 80th minute. The Braves hosted King University on Senior Day, and it turned out to be one to remember with a dominating 6-0 win over the Tornado. In the win Anna Grossheim scored five of the Braves' six goals, breaking a UNCP single-game record.

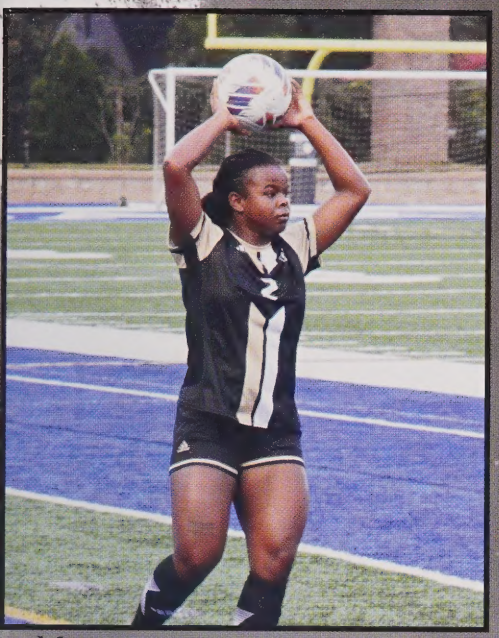
With a 8-4 record, the Braves drew the No. 2 seed in the Conference Carolinas Championship Tournament and were looking for a fourth straight conference title. After a bye in the quarterfinals, the Braves were matched against their I-95 rivals, No. 3 seed Francis Marion University, who they tied twice during the regular season. The teams battled evenly back and forth, but the Braves saw their season come to an end on a Patriots goal in the last 51 seconds of the game.

Four Braves were named to the CSC Academic All-District Squad: Anna Grossheim, Freya Lodge Whitham, Eli Söderberg and Eugenie Feitosa Amidou; Grossheim and Whitham also made the D2CCA All-Southeast Region team.

Shakira Kafero Roberts was named Conference Carolinas Freshman of the Year alongside the Scholar-Athlete of the Year, Anna Grossheim, who was also named to the D2CCA All-America Team.



Anna Bass punts in the tie game against Barton College on the road.

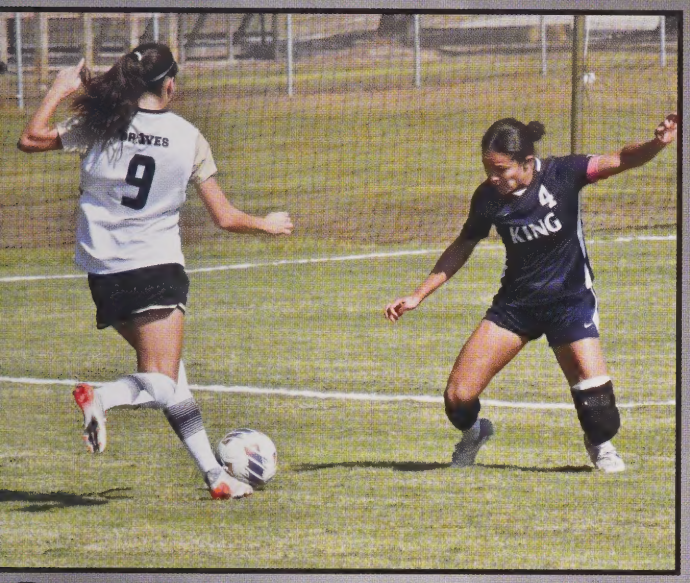


Maya McDonald throws in a pass during a game on Barton's home pitch.

NCAA Woman of The Year Finalist

Grossheim was a Top 3 finalist for Division 2 from hundreds of nominees. "It was amazing," she said after the ceremony in Nashville on Jan. 17. "I had the whole day to spend with the 30 other honorees [from across all three divisions]. They are all such remarkable and amazing women that are doing such crazy things," she said. "I hope they inspire the next generation."

Anna Grossheim flanked by Conference Carolinas Commissioner Chris Colvin and Chancellor Cummings.

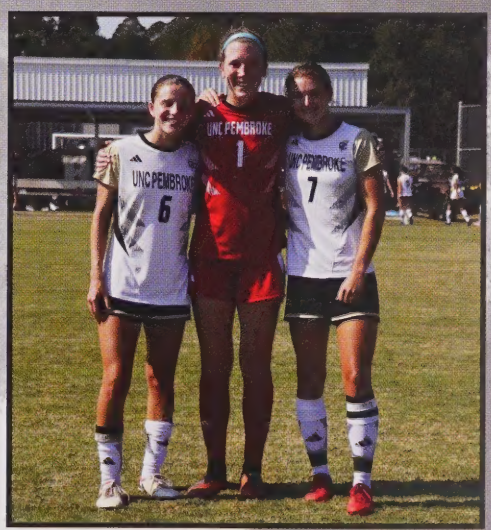


Eli Söderberg will slip past this King defender in a win at home.

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
1	North Georgia	2
1	Lenoir-Rhyne	4
7	North Greenville	0
1	Francis Marion	1
2	Mount Olive	1
4	Limestone	0
9	Shorter	0
1	Barton	1
2	Young Harris	0
3	Chowan	2
1	Francis Marion	1
3	Mount Olive	0
3	Barton	0
1	Wingate	2
6	King	0
1	Chowan	1
1	Francis Marion	2

he Hawks are all over Mercy Bell, but she had two second-half oals in this win against Chowan at home on Oct. 8.



Left to right: Maria Cancio, Anna Bass and Anna Grossheim celebrate Senior Day before the blowout against King University.

In It for the Long Run

The women's cross-country team started the season off on the right foot with a Top-Five team finish in the USC-Upstate meet. Moureen Kimaiyo turned in a strong performance in the 5K and outpaced all runners in Division 2, finishing 24th in a field of 157. The team turned in higher finish times than three Division 1 teams and was first in D2, assisted by a 39th-place finish by Jackline Kosgei. This propelled the squad to a season full of success, including a second-place finish at the Chanticleer Challenge in Conway, South Carolina, and first place out of six in the annual Greensboro Invitational, hosted by the Greensboro Pacesetters Track Club, where the Braves swept the top four spots in the 5K: Kimaiyo with a time of 19:07.14, Kosgei 19:41.27, Michela Gritti 20:07.33, and Malea Vennewitz 20:33.67.

Back Row, left to right: Sofia Skidmore, Lizzy Laurine, Michela Gritti, LaNiya Harris, Mariah Spencer

Front Row: Malea Bennewitz, Moureen Kimaiyo, Jana Termos, Leticia Peña

In the final regular season meet of the season, the Braves placed in the Top 20 of 34 teams at University of Alabama-Huntsville, where Kimaiyo had a personal-best time of 21:48 in the 6K, which was enough for a 29th-place finish out of more than 260 runners. Kosgei was 81st (22:41), and Michela Gritti had a personal-best time of 23:24.5, placing 115th.

In the Conference Carolinas Championship on Oct. 26 in Spartanburg, the Braves placed third as a team but not before Kimaiyo nabbed the women's individual crown in the 6K for the second straight year, with a time of 21:46.1. She was named Conference Carolinas Runner of the Year on the women's side. The Braves sent seven women to the NCAA Southeast Regional on Nov. 9, where Kimaiyo's school-record-breaking time of 21:37.7 in the 6K led her to a fifth-place finish and qualified her for nationals. Kosgei came in 54th with a time of 23:32.5, while Gritti finished 64th at 23:51.7. Kimaiyo put the finishing touches on her 2024 cross country season with a 152nd-place finish at the NCAA National Championships in Sacramento, California, just the second women's distance runner from UNCP to compete at nationals, after Kosgei, who went in 2022.

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	MEET	TEAMS
4th	Upstate Eyeopener	16
2nd	Chanticleer Challenge	3
1st	40th Annual Greensboro Invitational	6
17th	UAH Chargers Invite	4
3rd	Confernece Carolinas Championship	13
9th	NCAA Southeast Regional	26
152nd	NCAA Championships: Kimaiyo	261

Eat. Sleep. Run. Three-peat.

The men's cross country team capped off another strong campaign and fulfilled preseason predictions to take the Conference Carolinas team title for the third straight year.

With the women's squad they kicked off their season on Sept. 6 with a fourth-place finish at the USC-Upstate Eyeopener. Ryan Jimenez placed 20th in a field that represented a cross-section of D1, D2 and D3 runners. The Braves struggled against two D1 teams, Coastal Carolina and The Citadel, at the Chanticleer Challenge on Sept. 13, but showed their mettle two weeks later at the 40th Annual Greensboro Invitational, where the team placed first overall out of five schools. Kelvin Kibet led the pack for the Braves in the 5K (15:58.66), and UNCP came away with nine of the top 11 finishes, taking home a perfect score of 15 points.

UNCP closed out the regular season with a Top-20 finish out of 35 schools at the Chargers Invite on Oct. 12 in Huntsville, Alabama. Kibet recorded a new personal best in the 8K (25:16.2) and placed 73rd in a field of more than 200 runners. Antony Kigen (25:23.2), Lucas Nervo (25:56.3) and Payden Lewis (26:23) each enjoyed personal-best times. From there the team got set for the Conference Carolinas Championship 8K on Oct. 26. Kelvin Kibet's fourth-place finish on the big day, with a time of 25:26.5, helped pace the Braves to secure the team's title, shored up by ninth, tenth, 12th and 13th-place finishes from Jimenez, Jack Pheiffer, Norman Junker, and Kigen, respectively. Kibet was named Conference Carolinas Freshman of the Year on the men's side.

The Braves set their sights on the NCAA Southeast Regionals on Nov. 9, where Jack Phieffer's 30th-place finish in the 10K race with a personal-best time of 31:28.8 helped propel the team to sixth place out of 28 schools. The Braves had five runners in the Top 60 out of 191 men and ended their season on a high note in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Jimenez, Phieffer, Junker and Kigen were named to the All-Conference Second Team, and Kibet was named to First Team.

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	MEET	TEAMS
4th	Upstate Eyeopener	18
3rd	Chanticleer Challenge	3
1st	40th Annual Greensboro Invitational	5
17th	UAH Chargers Invite	35
1st	Confernece Carolinas Championship	13
6th	NCAA Southeast Regional	28

Eugenie Feitosa Amidou, also known as Genie, is captain of the Braves soccer team and a key starter for Coach Andersson. But despite her success on the team, her biggest dream lies far beyond the lines of the soccer field. She left her family and friends in Montreal, Canada, to fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor. With a need for caretaking and a love for chemistry, Genie believes that being an obstetrician-gynecologist would be the perfect job for her.

"I feel like it's easy for people to open up to me," Genie says. "I feel like I am great at making them comfortable as well, so OB-GYN will be an easy job for me."

Being a junior in the pre-med major would be hectic for anyone. Yet, on top of schoolwork, Genie balances soccer, Health Careers Club, Chemistry and Physics Club, and tutoring.

"I love having a purpose, I love feeling like I'm doing something to better myself as a person, that's why I like to keep myself busy," Genie says. "To reach my goal it's better to do more than less, and I guess that's what kind of drives me."

Even though her dream was crystal clear, leaving home was not. In Montreal she was close with friends and neighbors. Every street, every house, and every corner of the city was as familiar as the back of her hand. But she knew if she wanted to reach her goal, the United States was the answer. The move ended up being far less lonely than she expected. On move-in day she found the two teammates, Freya and Mercy, who will forever be part of her life, along with 17 other teammates who became her second family.

Genie likes to attend the home football games when they don't conflict with soccer and says they're some of the best events she has attended at UNCP. "I love the atmosphere, and my boyfriend also plays there, so it is fun seeing him play," she says.

--Profiled by Eli Söderberg

Eugenie Feitosa Amidou

"I love having a purpose, I love feeling like I'm doing something to better myself as a person, that's why I like to keep myself busy."

Disillusioned playing football at Barton College, Desmond Thompson of Wilson, North Carolina, transferred to UNCP and found himself trading the gridiron for the boxing ring.

After transferring to Pembroke, Desmond started boxing at Gold Glove Boxing & Fitness in St. Pauls. With campus being only a short drive away, Desmond found he could always connect with his coach and rapidly improve his skills.

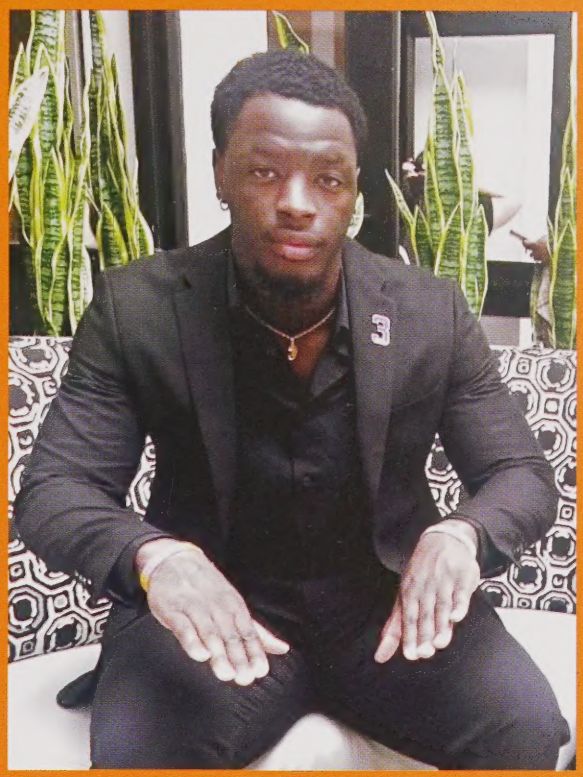
"Football was always a passion of mine from a young age," says Desmond. "But playing at Barton showed me that it's not always straightforward. Football comes and goes. Boxing gave me the opportunity I was looking for. My family and friends are so much better off because I picked up the gloves."

Desmond's team at the boxing gym also helped him keep a clear mind and focus on starting his career off on the right path. Three years ago Desmond started boxing professionally and won his first fight in Charlotte. Boxing has also helped Desmond in his journey as a student. Enduring the mental aspects of boxing helped him to stay on task and to balance adulthood with his academic responsibilities.

Desmond is a father to an infant son. "My son is my world," Desmond says. "Every day I wake up and wonder how I can give him a new story to tell about the man his dad is."

Becoming a member of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity also helped Desmond align his values. Members of the fraternity are educated on the achievement it takes to make an impact in an ever-changing world. "Omega men are strong, studious role models, and from the first moment I stepped on UNCP's campus I knew I wanted to be a member," he says. Desmond hopes that his time doing service as an Omega man can help more minority men get into positions of higher status. Now he's looking forward to graduating in May with the bachelor's degree in social work.

--Profiled by Zaiheim Lang



Desmond Thompson

"Omega men are strong, studious role models, and from the first moment I stepped on the UNCP campus, I knew I wanted to be a member."

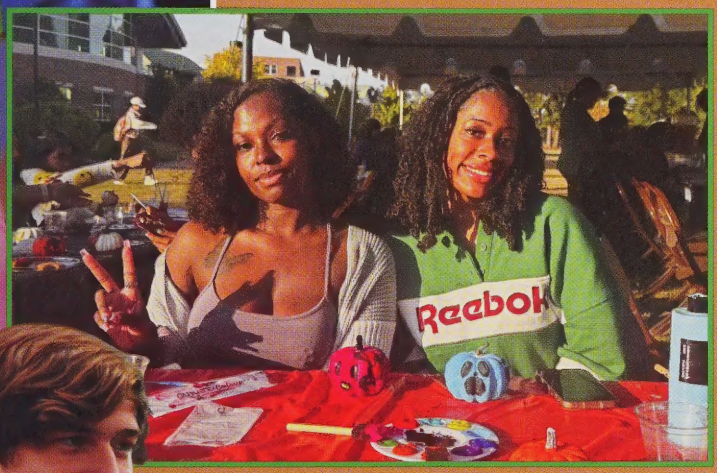
student Profiles

Brooke McNeil

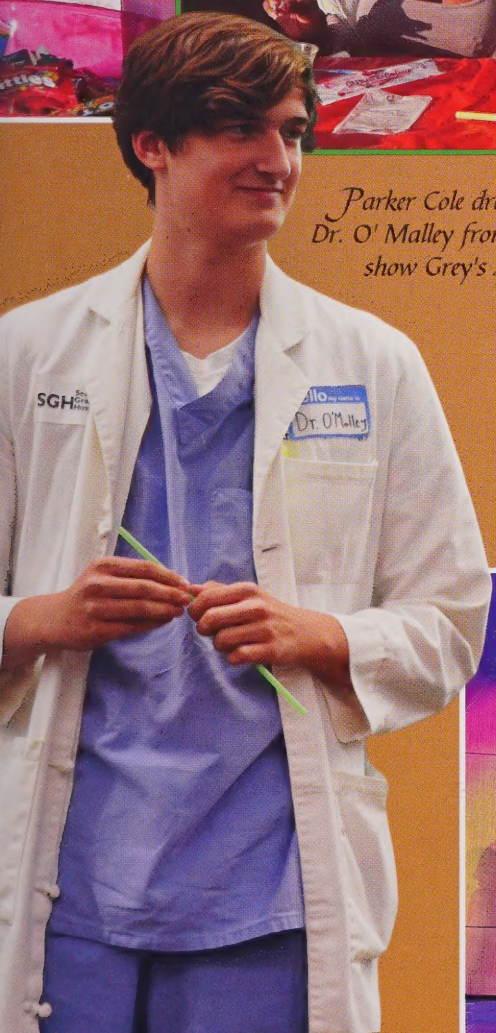
First Lady Rebecca Cummings dressed as the Cowardly Lion from The Wizard of Oz.

Stephanie Grandy poses with Bravehawk, who dressed as Anxiety from "Inside Out 2."

No Tricks, Just Treats



At the end of October, campus came alive with a variety of festive events that brought students and staff together to celebrate. The Pumpkin Bash, hosted by the Year One office in partnership with GEAR UP, invited students to unleash their creativity by painting pumpkins and enjoying snacks. The annual Trick-or-Treat on the Quad for local children was another highlight, with Title IX staff **Jasmine McCrae, Kaye Patel Fraley, Ana Rivers** and **Lynn Hinson** adding a touch of enchantment with their princess-themed display (facing page). The Trunk or Treat event in the Jones Center parking lot saw student organizations offering sweet surprises. **Deanna Freshley** and **Katie Crossgrove** charmed everyone in their Winnie the Pooh costumes (top left). To cap off the festivities, musical theatre students captivated audiences with two nights of their Spooktacular Musical Review, featuring thrilling adaptations of songs from "Beetlejuice," "Sweeney Todd," "Chicago," "Little Shop of Horrors," and more. Sorry, but ya' had to be there!



Parker Cole dressed up as Dr. O' Malley from the hit show Grey's Anatomy.

Ephraim Boyte had a blast singing the part of Beetlejuice.

Top: Joseph Holder as Camillo and Jaimere Green as King Polixenes discuss a plot against the king's life.

Bottom: The lady-in-waiting Emilia (Cheyenne Ward, left) tells Paulina, the queen's confidante and advocate (Cameron Holder), that the queen has given birth in prison.

Cast List

King Leontes - Jonathan Drahos
Paulina/Clown - Cameron Holder
Queen Hermione/Time - Chelsea Marie
King Polixenes/2nd Servant - Jaimere Green
Antigonus/Dorcas/3rd Gentlewoman - Kayla Laraga Ruiz
Archidamus/1st Lord/Jailer/Mariner/Celomenes/Dion - Jamaal Thorpe
Mopsa/2nd Gentlewoman - Takyia Bishop
Florizel/1st Servant - Anthony Chavis
Perdita/Emilia - Cheyenne Ward
The Shepherd - Marquis Wilkins
Camillo- Joseph Holder
Autolycus - Mya Bryant

Left: Jonathan Drahos as King Leontes seeks the council of his servants and advisers.

Bottom left: Marquis Wilkins as The Shepherd, provides comic relief in the second act.

Below: Chelsea Marie shows her acting range in the role of the wronged Queen Hermione, who is eventually redeemed.

The Winter's Tale

A Shakespearean classic involving heartbreak and misplaced rage, live on the GPAC stage

One of Shakespeare's most provocative plays was the subject of this year's fall production in UNCP's theatre program. "The Winter's Tale," directed by Dr. Jonathan Drahos, ran from Nov. 14-15 and showcased masterful performances from a cast composed equally of newcomers to the stage and veterans.

Dr. Drahos was a last-minute replacement in the role of Leontes, King of Sicily, who becomes suspicious of his pregnant wife, Hermione (**Chelsea Marie**), and begins to suspect that she is having an affair with his friend, Polixenes, the King of Bohemia (**Jaimere Green**). Through his paranoia and rage, Leontes eventually sentences the queen to prison, where she gives birth to a daughter, Perdita. By the time she is found innocent of infidelity, her firstborn son has died of illness, and the queen eventually succumbs fatally to her heartbreak. The infant Perdita is taken to another kingdom and raised by a shepherd, where she grows up and eventually falls in love with Florizel, the son of Polixenes (**Anthony Chavis**).

The minimalist set and unique costume design made the show both dramatic and comic. The play is known for Shakespeare's famous stage direction: "Exit, pursued by a bear."

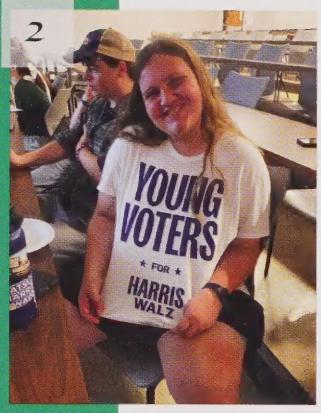
Owen Phillips gives a thumbs up for this celebrity sighting, and Sallyann Clark takes advantage of the photo opp!

PIT STOP AT PEMBROKE

Students and staff alike were excited to discover that former President Bill Clinton had stopped on campus Oct. 18 to check out the Museum of the Southeast American Indian while campaigning in the region for presidential candidate Kamala Harris. It was a Friday morning and not publicized. A police presence prevented people from approaching the front of Old Main, but yearbook class was occurring just yards away in the rear of the building. Before departing, Clinton encouraged his security to let the people meet him. This was actually Clinton's second visit to UNCP. He campaigned for his wife Hillary Clinton and spoke in front of the bookstore on Oct. 26, 2016, with other Democrats running for state offices.

Students watching TV in the Chavis Center see Kamala Harris take a slight, early lead in the vote count.

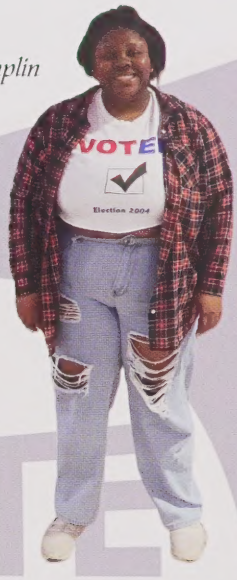
A NIGHT OF PIZZA & ELECTIONS



1) *Elijah Griffin and Renee Smith*

2) *Jackson Mossolle*

Aaliyah Pamplin



Jalayna Pough (left) and Shania McMillian

Students gathered in the Chavis Center on Nov. 5 for an election viewing party that was fueled by pizza and other late-night refreshments. Hopes were high on both sides of the aisle. In the end, former President Donald Trump won the state of North Carolina for the third time in a row and the presidency for a second (non-consecutive) term. But North Carolinians elected state attorney general Josh Stein, a Democrat, as governor.

If These Walls

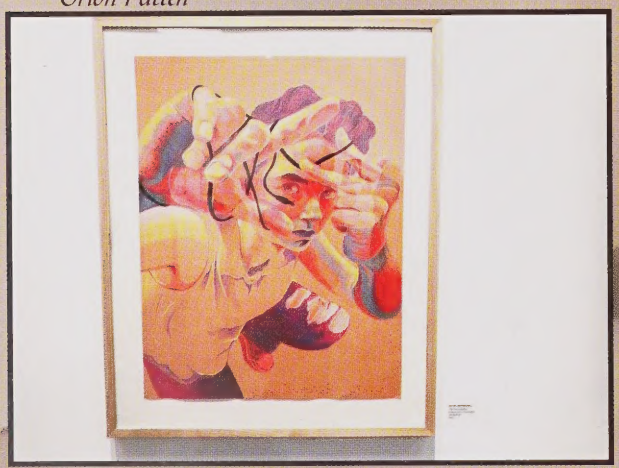
S.O.M.E. Self-Expression

From an animated TV show pitch to critiques of society, this spring 2024 installation displayed the very heart and soul of four studio artists at UNCP. We loved to see our fellow students culminate their four years of hard work. Orion Patten, Elizabeth West, Monika Czartoszewski and Seth Rogers gave us an immersive experience at their senior capstone show called "S.O.M.E Self-Expression."

Seth Rogers

Elizabeth West

Orion Patten

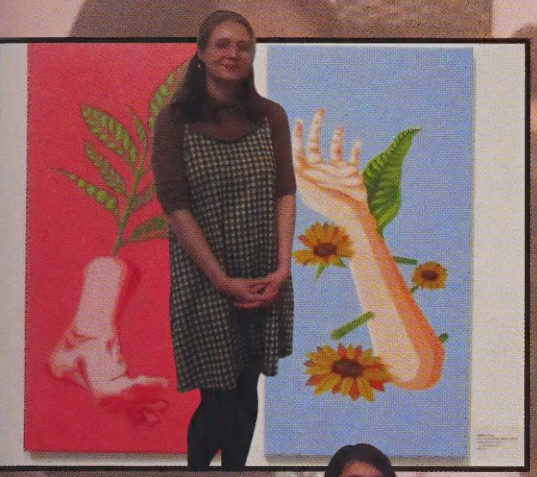


Monika Czartoszewski

Could Talk...

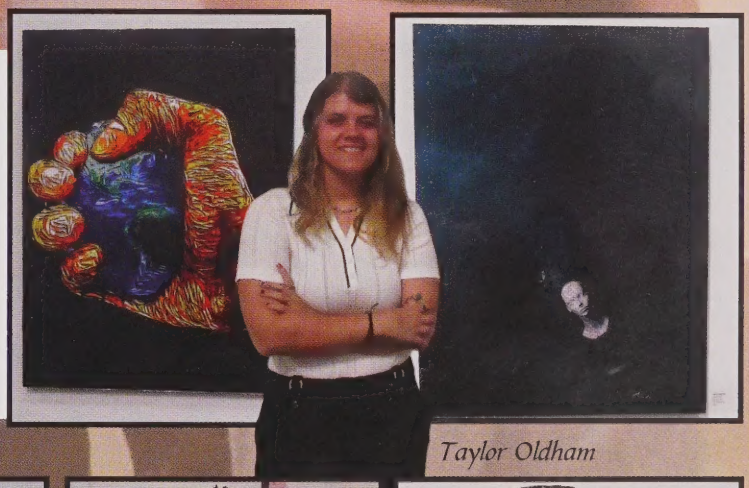
Essence of Nature

Whimsy pervaded the walls of the A.D. Gallery in the form of sculptures, paper butterflies, ceramics and oil on canvas at the November capstone show "Essence of Nature." The talented Kailey Hamet, Taylor Oldham, Ireland Rhoads, Katarina Lee, Deanna Johnson and Summer Tracy shared similar themes on how nature intersects with humanity.



Summer Tracy

Deanna Johnson



Taylor Oldham

Katarina Lee

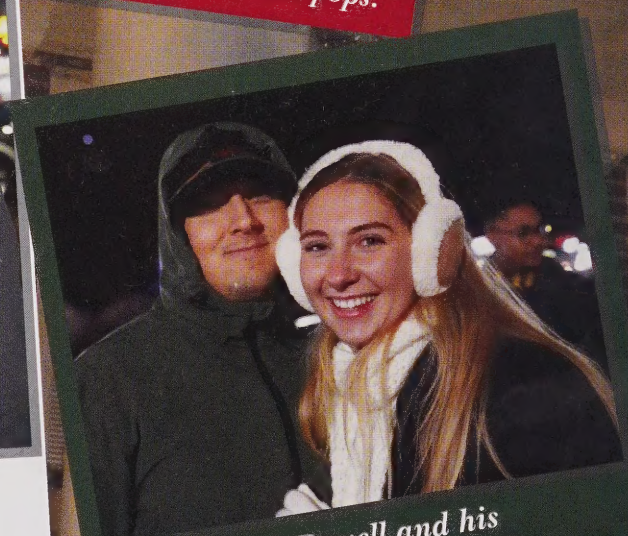
Ireland Rhoads

BraveHawk spreads joy to freshman Harlem Jones.

"The best way to spread holiday cheer, is singing loud for all to hear."

Julisa Herandez and Lilian Michael-Acevedo hand out cake pops.

Jada Evans, Elianna Craven and Zamir Newkirk huddle together to keep warm.



Zach Powell and his fiancée Lindsay Branch

It's the most Wonderful time of the year

Year after year, twinkling lights are strung up the columns and eaves of Old Main. Community members, students and employees huddle close while sipping cups of steaming apple cider and hot chocolate, while munching on a cake pop or two. Carolers sing the season's greetings, while children and adults alike line up to take photos with Santa Claus and BraveHawk. The event is always a "Ya' had to be there moment" that brings a holiday spirit to the end of the term.

We're fa la la loving the Pembroke Singers !

Amber Mann's heart grew three sizes this night.

Elijah Griffin poses with BraveHawk.

Raven Haston

Nathan Tutor

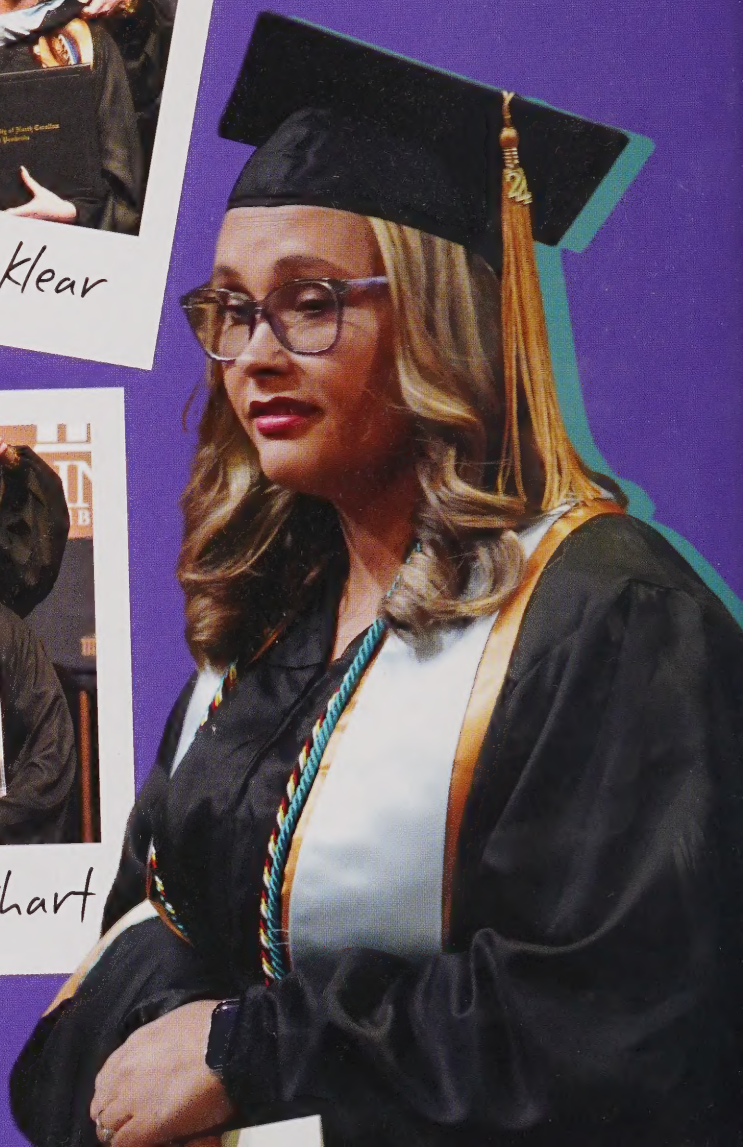
Emma Caulder

Anna Lloyd

Kyra Locklear

Rosalee Campbell

Delsin Burkhart



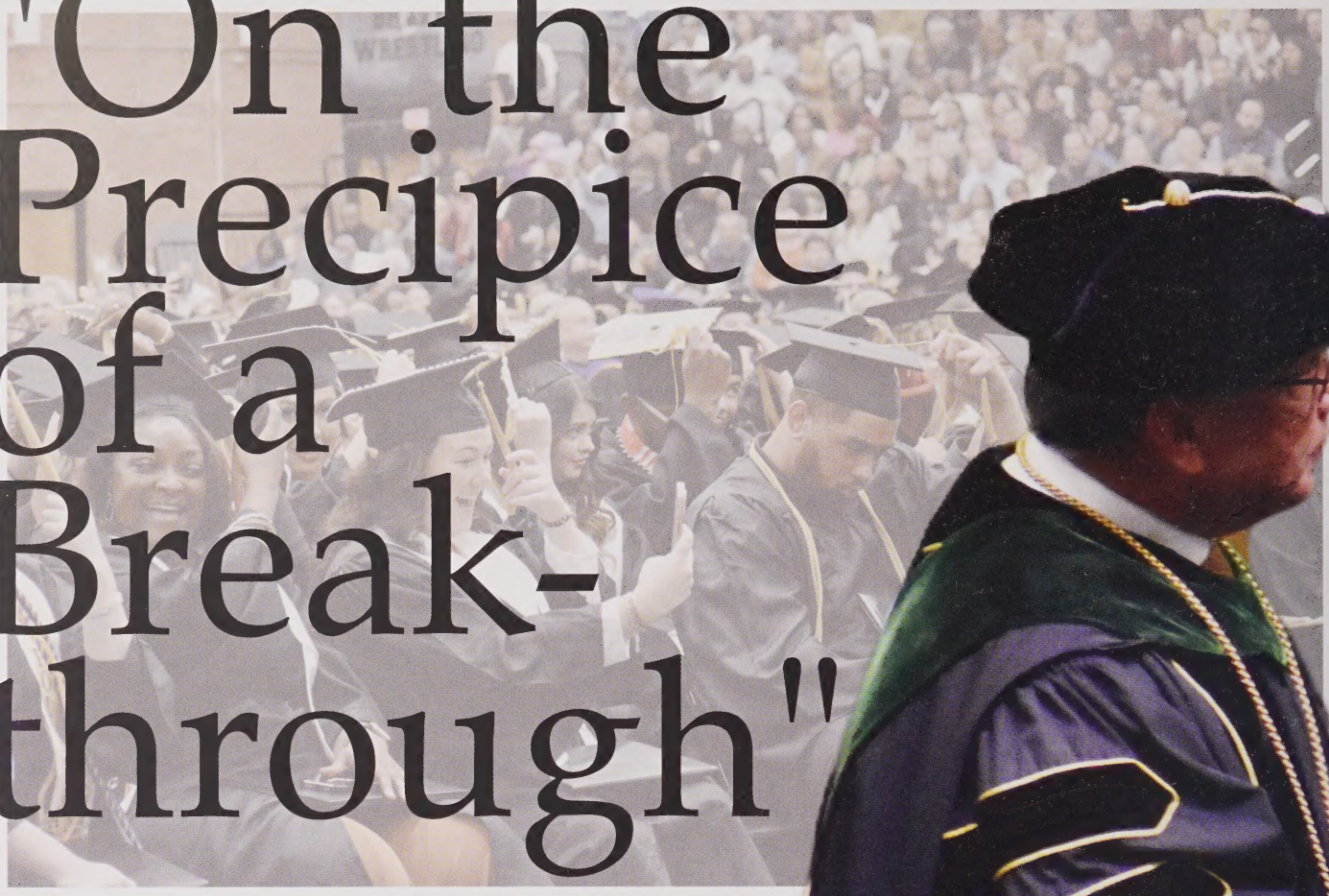
"What Matters is in *Hearts* and *Minds*..."

Commencement speaker Dr. Ryan Anderson of the Department of History implored the graduate students on Dec. 13 to "Go forth with the purpose of holding true to the value you have built into yourself here, and continue being bright and beautiful." Anderson was the 2024 recipient of the UNC Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence. He paraphrased the early 20th-Century American President Woodrow Wilson from his time as president of Princeton, who said what matters most about a university is not the money, buildings or apparatuses but what is in the hearts and minds of the students and teachers.

The Graduate School conferred nearly 400 degrees that Friday night, and seven states were represented. At least one online student came from as far away as Texas to have her MBA announced in the Givens Performing Arts Center. Among the face-to-face students were citizens of 16 countries. Dr. Irene Aiken, the dean of the Graduate School, performed her ceremonial duty of draping the master's degree "hood" over the shoulders of each grad. Chancellor Cummings told them, "Wherever you want to land in life, you can get there from here."

Left to right: Lauren Jacobs and Kathy Locklear

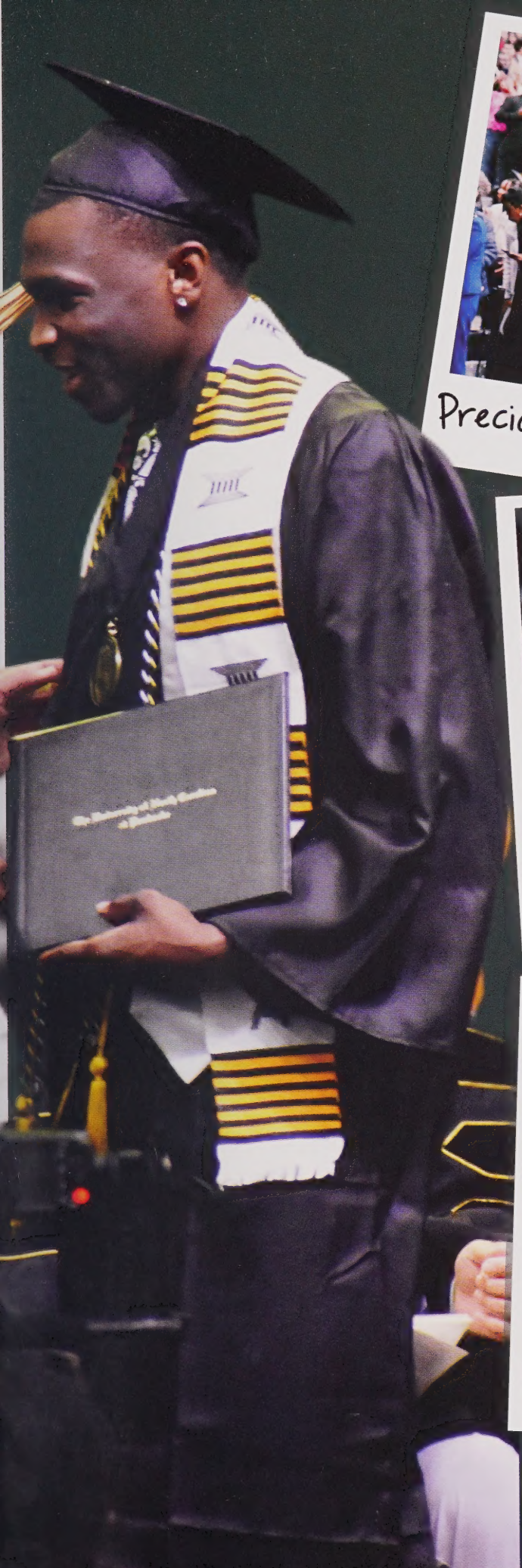
"On the Precipice of a Break-through"



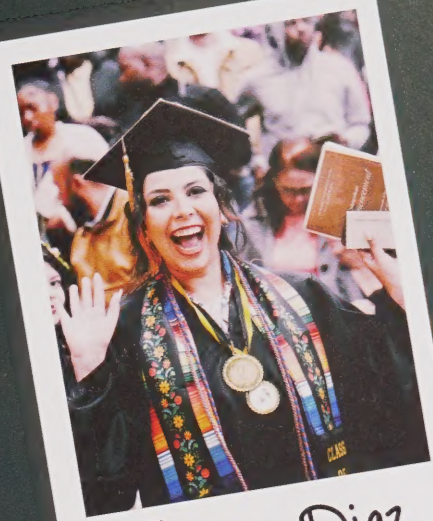
Keynote speaker David Crabtree, a distinguished broadcaster, told the undergrads assembled on Dec. 14 in the Jones Center, "You are a point of light, and that light is what breaks through our darkness." He said he hopes they'll strive to hold onto their dreams and passions. The graduates may one day find themselves standing at "the precipice of a breakthrough" and should always believe they can change the world, Crabtree observed.

SGA President Magally Ortiz-Rojas praised her peers for being resilient, determined and purposeful. "Your experiences and lessons will serve as your tool-box as you embark on your next journey in life," she explained.

The youngest graduate on that Saturday morning was online student Kaylie Gore, 19, who earned the bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies. She got a jump on college classes while still in high school and is already employed as a teacher at a charter school. Gore was joined in celebrating the accomplishment by about 600 other students, who represent 10 countries, 18 states and 62 North Carolina counties.

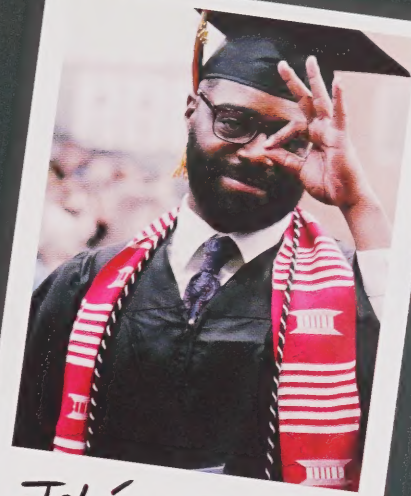


Precious Daleigh

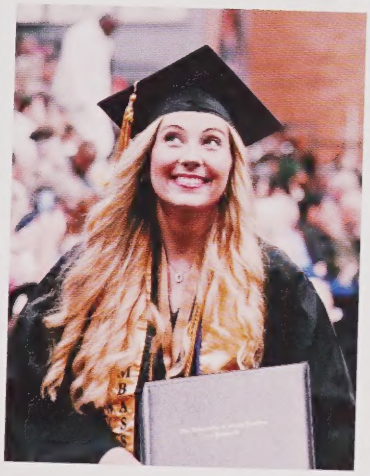


Jimena Diaz

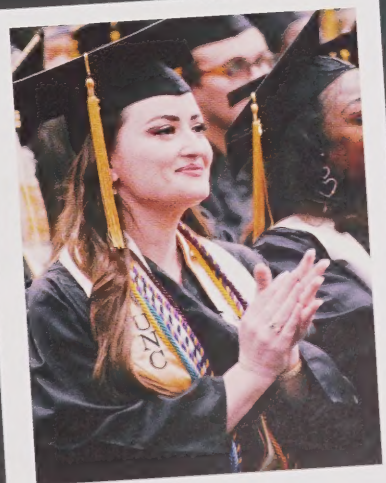
Tara Campbell



Jabéorn Roberts



Lindsay Branch



Marilynn Akers

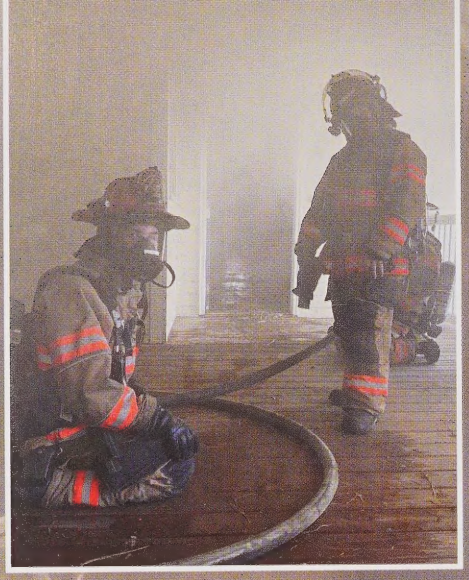
2025

WINTER

Winter's concerto unfolded with contrasting movements. UNCP students enjoyed a snow day just one week into classes in January, two days after the second inauguration of President Donald Trump on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Trump immediately courted controversy by pardoning Jan. 6 rioters and appointing billionaire Elon Musk to slash federal grants and payrolls with a team of young "software engineers" who accessed government databases. Federal agencies were also instructed to dismantle all diversity, equity and inclusion programs and to remove observances of diversity from their websites.

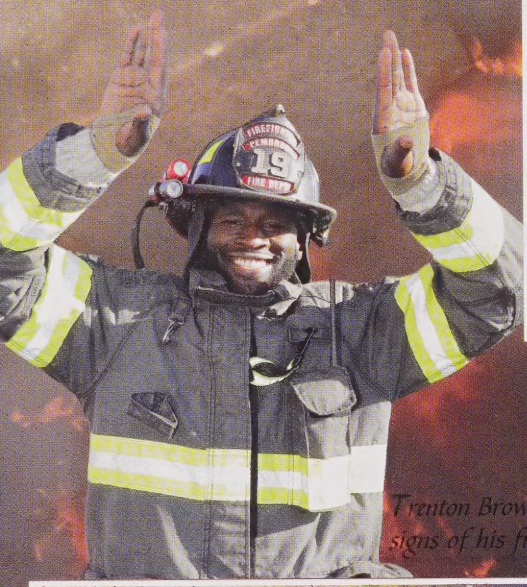
In the cultural arena, the 67th Annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 2 celebrated artists whose voices rose above the winter chill. Kendrick Lamar's "Not Like Us" dominated the evening with five wins and became the most-awarded song in Grammy history. Beyoncé became the first Black artist to win Best Country Album. Zoe Saldaña won Best Supporting Actress at the Oscars for her role in "Emilia Pérez," a musical about a transgender cartel leader.

UNCP was recognized by U.S. News & World Report for online undergraduate business degree programs, tied for 79th on a list of 218 schools. The university signed the "Green Chemistry Commitment" with the nonprofit Beyond Benign, to encourage environmentally friendly processes and materials in chemistry courses and research projects. Retired professor Dr. Richard Vela was recognized for his 53 years of teaching literature, writing and film studies at UNCP. The school also announced they're awarding the new food services contract to Aramark after three decades with Sodexo.



Firefighters tested strength and stamina as they snaked water hoses up the covered, exterior staircases.

Up to 15 fire departments were represented over the course of three weekends.



Trenton Brown makes one of the hand signs of his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi.

Anna Grossheim Duncan prepares a hose to fight the fires.

It Takes A Village

When the Village Apartments complex was demolished in December to make way for an allied health sciences building, UNCP partnered with local fire departments to provide rare live-fire training instead of hiring a demolition team to do the work. Earlier plans to renovate Village fell through after extensive, systemic water damage was found as the result of repeated hurricanes and issues with the masonry. Officials met on a monthly basis to discuss safety protocols for the burn and to address concerns for both campus and the town.

About a dozen fire departments got real-world experience with how fires move through multistory structures and how to move hose lines up and down staircases. UNCP students who are also firefighters were included in the call for participants. **Anna Grossheim Duncan** (above, with fellow student **Trenton Brown**) called the opportunity "invaluable."

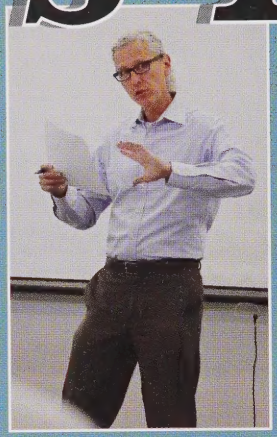
"We don't get this experience often, so it's really good to be out here," she said on the first day of the burn. Brown, too, found the opportunity "amazing."

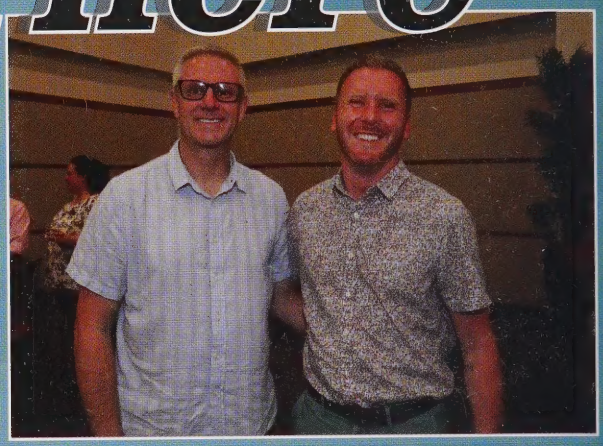
--Reported by Clayton Luce

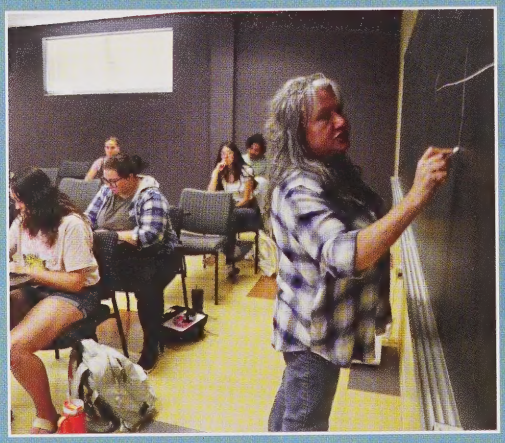
Photo credits: Willis Glasgow & Michael Litty

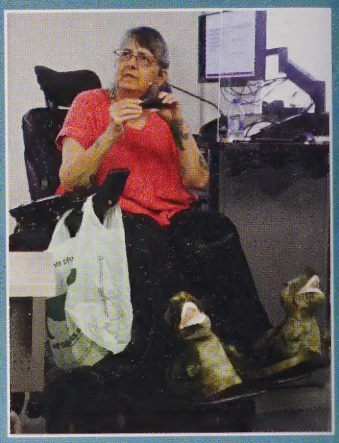
Multistory complexes like this are "popping up all over," said one trainer. "And we seldom get a chance to burn something of this magnitude."

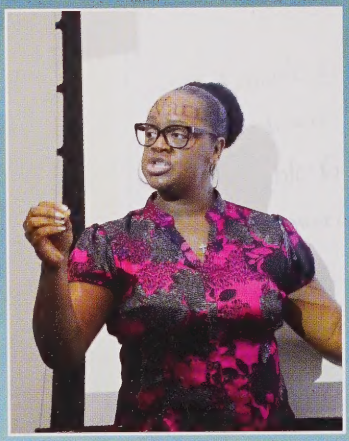
Always There

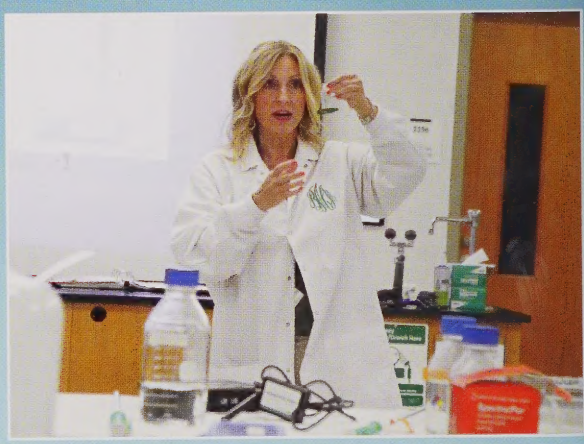


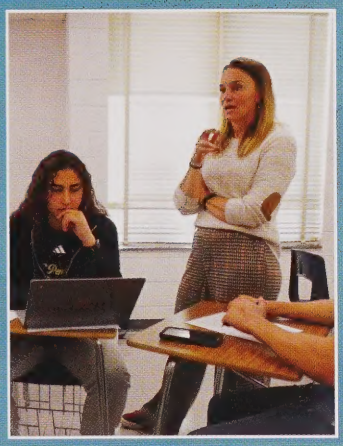




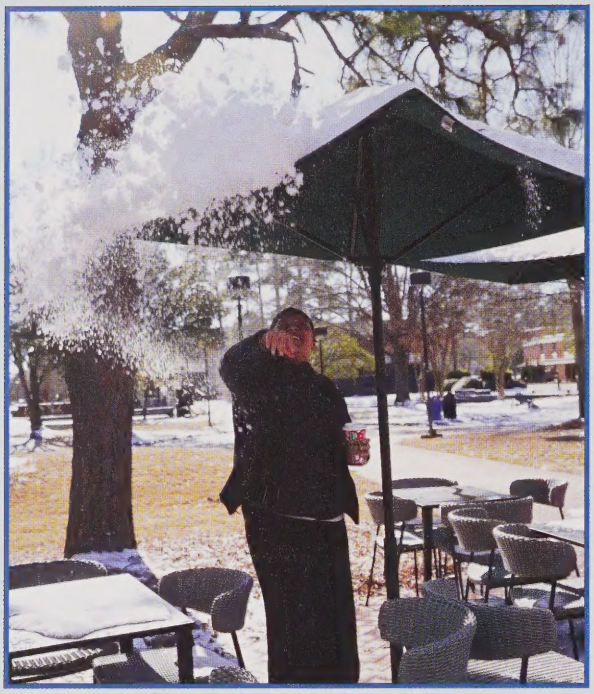








For You



Tonya Juarez makes her own living snow globe.

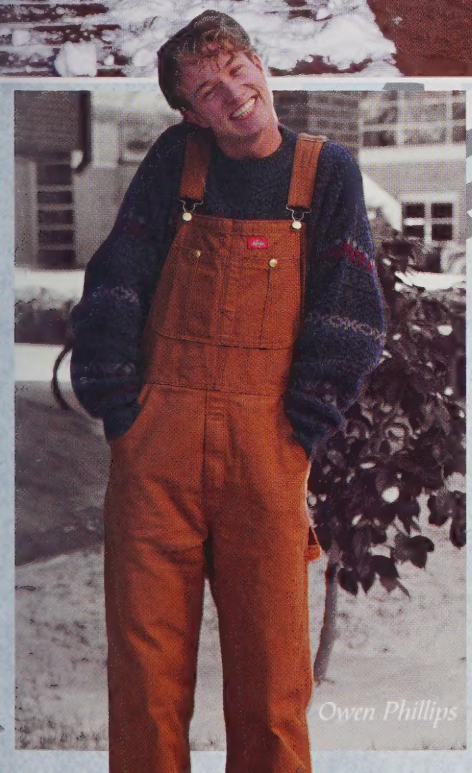
Below, left to right: Brette Doile, Abby Peduzzi, Emily Collings, Tyler Patterson and Anaya Carter

SNOW DAY

Living in North Carolina, we find snow to be a rare phenomenon to wake up to, but on the night of Jan. 21, flurries soon transformed into layers of fluffy snow. By the AM's, campus had come to life with snowball fights outside of North Residence Hall, while some students simply enjoyed a scenic stroll. Grad student Andrés Silva said, "Walking through campus in a winter wonderland is a must, even when you live at Pointe." Classes were canceled, yet many students got up the next morning to see what remained of the snow. **Amirrah Solin, Marizza Rodriguez** and **Amya George** (right) made the trek to the Student Center to get food, where they found many more students warming up and satisfying their hunger. The snow didn't last, but the traces students left in the snow will stay imprinted in memories forever.

Snow Stories

We asked BraveNation how they spent their time in the snow. Here are some of our favorite stories.



Owen Phillips

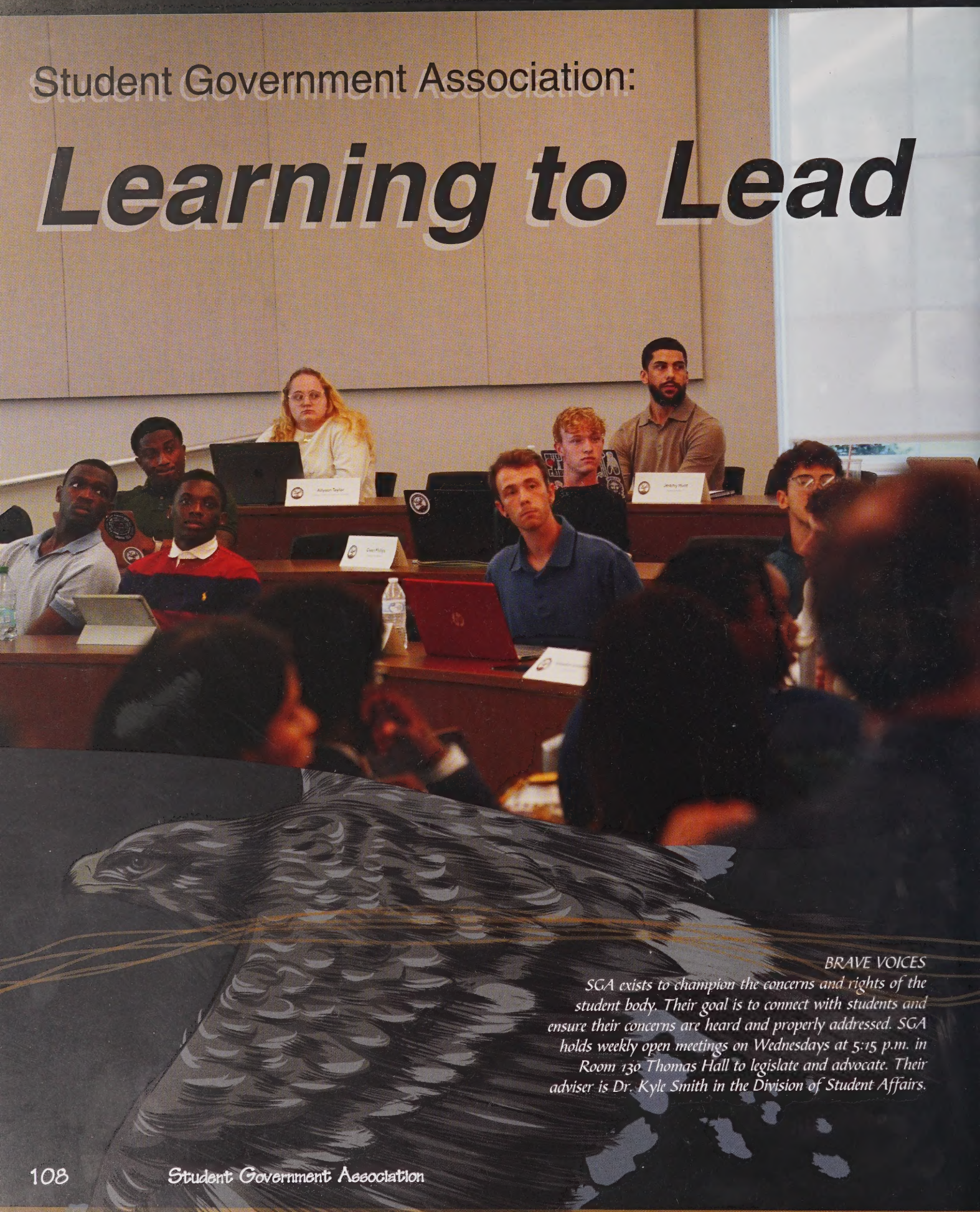
Nothing was stopping Madison Schwenneker from being in the snow. She walked through the snow two weeks post-foot-surgery, carefully walking on her stitches. Bombarded with campus life, she had her eyes on one goal: snow angel. As she lay in the snow, smile on her face, there was nothing in the world that could "yuk her yum." She stooped up to take a photo of her masterpiece and, to her surprise, she had lost her phone! Can you say, "Oh no?" She tried retracing her steps. Nothing. After five minutes of searching, she thought, "Could my phone possibly have gotten lost in the sauce?" Sure enough, there it lay, cold and lonely in a pile of snow created by her snow angel. She plucked it out, dusted it off, and snapped this great pic!

Alex Mills wasn't about to let the cold ruin a good time. After grabbing a nutritious meal of cold drinks and grilled cheeses from Starbucks, they ran into their volleyball teammates for a quick chat before heading to the football field. The snow was untouched – until they jumped right in. Snow angels, snowmen, and laughter filled the air, but then: WHAM! Savannah Whaley hit Alex with a snowball. Shocked for only a second, they quickly grabbed a handful of snow and fired back. Soon, a mini snowball battle broke out, with Addie Decker jumping in as well. Snow flew, the laughter echoed, and for a moment the cold didn't matter – just friends, fun, and a winter memory to last a long time.

Kaleigh Guy and her friends snapped Polaroid pictures in the falling flakes and made TikToks of epic snowball fights. Despite the fun, she knew she needed to head home. One problem: her car's brakes weren't exactly up to par. With twins Owen and Evan Phillips in the car, she set off, but just before Dunkin' Donuts the car began to hydroplane along the icy roads. Evan later said, "Those were not the doughnuts we wanted." Kaleigh frantically pressed buttons in her Chevy Traverse, using her maneuvering skills to make it to Cypress Hall, where she hunkered down for the night. The next morning she headed outside to drive to Courtyard, only to find not one, but two surprises! Tucked into her windshield were two parking tickets, courtesy of Frank, the campus traffic officer. "Not the kind of souvenirs I had in mind," said Kaleigh.

Student Government Association:

Learning to Lead



BRAVE VOICES

SGA exists to champion the concerns and rights of the student body. Their goal is to connect with students and ensure their concerns are heard and properly addressed. SGA holds weekly open meetings on Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m. in Room 130 Thomas Hall to legislate and advocate. Their adviser is Dr. Kyle Smith in the Division of Student Affairs.

FOSTERING *inclusion*

SGA president embodies the spirit of UNCP — blending leadership, academic excellence and a heart for community service.

Magally Ortiz-Rojas is a senior from Lumberton who originally chose to major in philosophy and religion, however, her passion for politics and governance led her to switch to political science and sociology. Magally is on the pre-law track, planning to attend law school, inspired by professors such as Dr. Jordin Dickerson, who graduated from UNCP before attending University of Virginia law school. "Having professors who have walked a similar path motivates me," she said.

Beyond her academics, Magally has been a fixture in student leadership, most recently as the president of SGA. She also interns for the Office of Leadership, Learning, and Community (formerly the Office of Community and Civic Engagement). In her four years at UNCP, she has shaped initiatives that promote democratic engagement and leadership development. Her involvement extends to her membership in the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, where she says she found unwavering support and sisterhood.

Magally also co-founded the Latin Student Union during her time at UNCP, reflecting her commitment to fostering spaces of inclusion and belonging. She is also a Sunday school teacher at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, where she prepares youth for their sacraments. Balancing these commitments with her studies and her commute from St. Francis, she's a role model in both time management and dedication.

When reflecting upon her time at UNCP, Magally expressed gratitude for the relationships she has built. "The friendships and support I've found here are ones that I'll carry with me," she said. One of her closest connections is with her friend Teresa Fernandez, who has always encouraged her throughout her college journey.

As Magally approaches graduation, she describes her feelings as bittersweet. While she's excited about the future, she's also sentimental about leaving behind the structure and community of college life.

(cont. on next page)

Owen Phillips

Natalie Belcourt

Dr. Kyle Smith

Dalton Allen

Magally and VP Teresa Fernandez

Magally Ortiz-Rojas

(cont. from previous page)

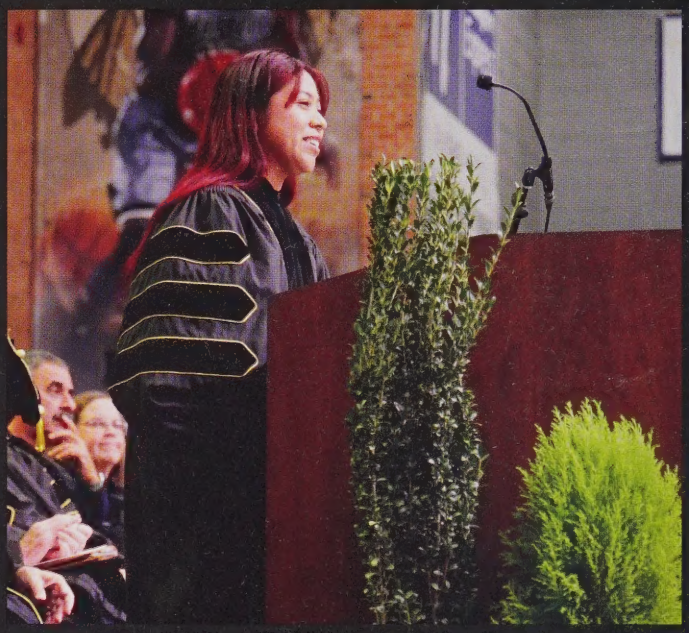
Magally continues to remain optimistic about her prospects for the future.

"Things have worked out in ways I didn't expect before, and I trust they will again," she said.

Magally has been active in the Honors College, Chancellor's Ambassadors, the food pantry, and in Model United Nations. As SGA president, she's also a voting member of UNCP's Board of Trustees. In 2023 she won a Community Impact Award from NC Campus Engagement, a network of 39 schools committed to educating students about civic and social responsibility. She was selected one of only eight students statewide for a North Carolina Civic Impact Fellowship last year.

The daughter of Mexican immigrants, Magally hopes to one day use her law school training to help others navigate their path to citizenship. She continues to embody the spirit of UNCP, blending leadership, academic excellence, and a heart for community service.

--Profiled by Jalayna Pough



Magally told her peers at winter commencement, "We are the architects of our lives, and the lens we see it through is all up to us."

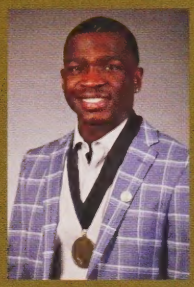
"My advice to all students: These four years go by quicker than you think. Take leaps of faith and chances while here at UNCP."

AULEY ABUDAYYA

LILLIAN ACVEDO

JUSTUS BREWINGTON

JEREMY HUNT



AARON LUCAS

ANESU MAVHIYA

SKYLA MILLER

UNCP 1887 SOCIETY

Congratulations

from the Division of Student Affairs to UNCP's 2024-25 Inductees!

Service, Learning, Engagement, Leadership, Integrity, School Spirit & Courage

BRAVE EXPERIENCE

Choose to be engaged. Build your brave experience!

LEARNING

Engage in transformative educational experiences in and beyond the discipline that encourages a self-motivated pursuit of knowledge.

BELONGING

Cultivate a sense of inclusion through active participation and commitment to discipline, career and campus.

COMMUNITY

Immerse yourself in the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources to create and strengthen supportive environments on and off campus.

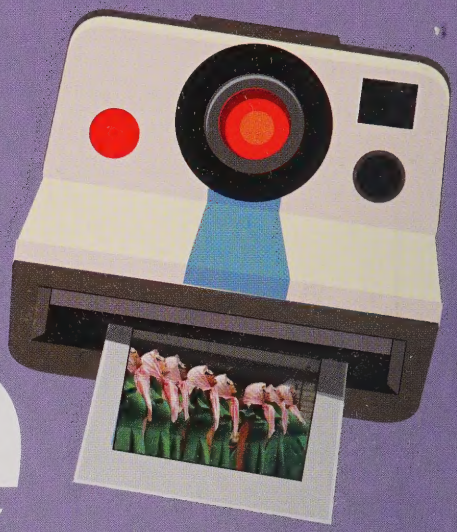
WELL-BEING

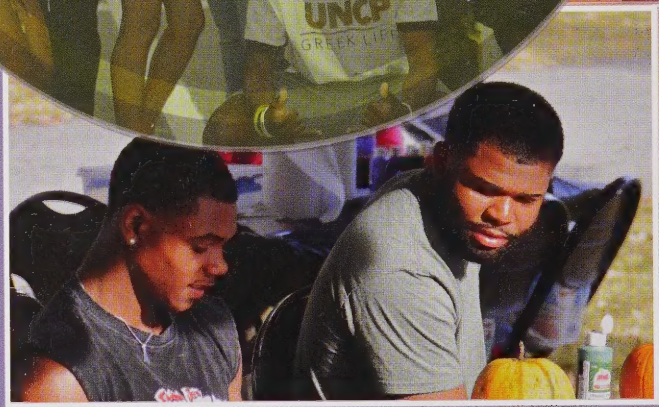
Practice healthy habits that promote a sustainable balance of your mental, physical and emotional wellness.

UNC PEMBROKE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

MORE THAN A CHAPTER

Greek Life

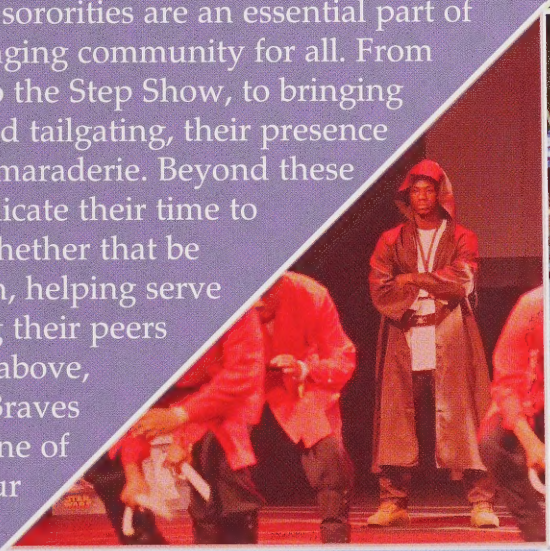


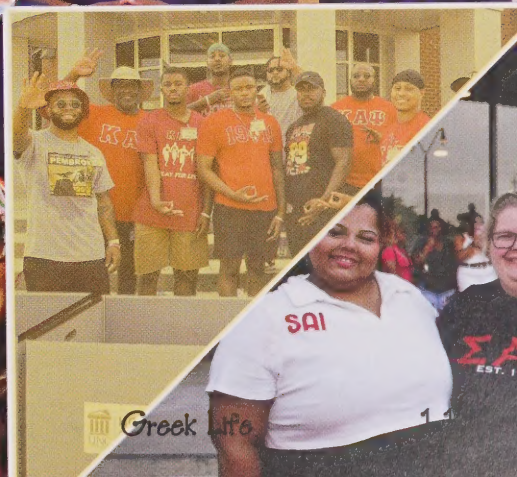


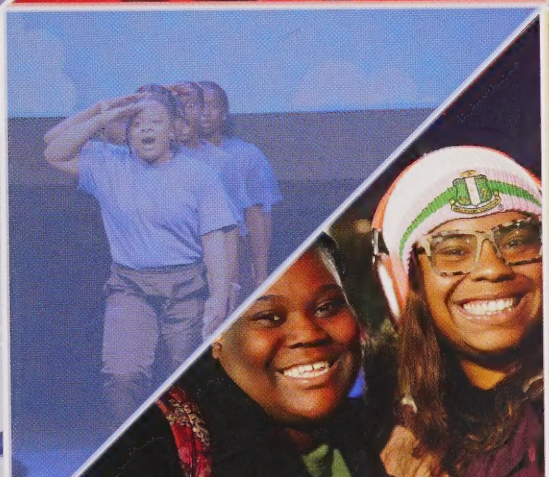
"A place where I could grow, give back, and build lifelong friendships with people who truly supported one another."

--Lorelai Swain, Kappa Delta

Greek life plays a crucial yet often overlooked role in shaping the vibrancy of campus life. While their contributions may not always be in the spotlight, fraternities and sororities are an essential part of making UNCP a lively and engaging community for all. From energizing BraveNation Bash, to the Step Show, to bringing excitement to Trunk-or-Treat and tailgating, their presence adds a sense of tradition and camaraderie. Beyond these events, Greek organizations dedicate their time to meaningful volunteer efforts, whether that be assisting with freshman move-in, helping serve meals in the Café, or supporting their peers academically. The group photo above, taken at Greek Night during a Braves basketball game, captures just one of the many ways they enhance our school spirit and create lasting connections. Their service, enthusiasm and creativity help shape a campus experience that is dynamic and welcoming for all.







Sigma Tau Delta, an English honor society

Philosophia

ORGS

UNCP has more clubs and co-curriculars than we can count. In the past, organizations needed at least 10 members to be an official student group. That's been relaxed to only three members, so now there's more opportunity for special interests to be served and a wider variety of activities and involvement to be offered. On these pages we show a sampling of groups that get out and about. This year Spectrum changed their group's name to **Lavender Student Alliance** (center). They meet regularly outside Starbucks for "Quoffee."

Criminal Justice Club

Gamma Theta Upsilon, an international geography honor society

Pre-Law Society

Black Student Union

Sociology Club

Chemistry and Physics Club

Blueprints

MEDIA MATTERS

Left: Kia Wynne interviews Reggie Brewer, who provides sage smudging for campus ceremonies.
Below, L to R: Nick Kolsin, Devin McCullough and Naseem Barnes in The Pine Needle suite.
Bottom: Genesis Benavides interviews the chancellor.

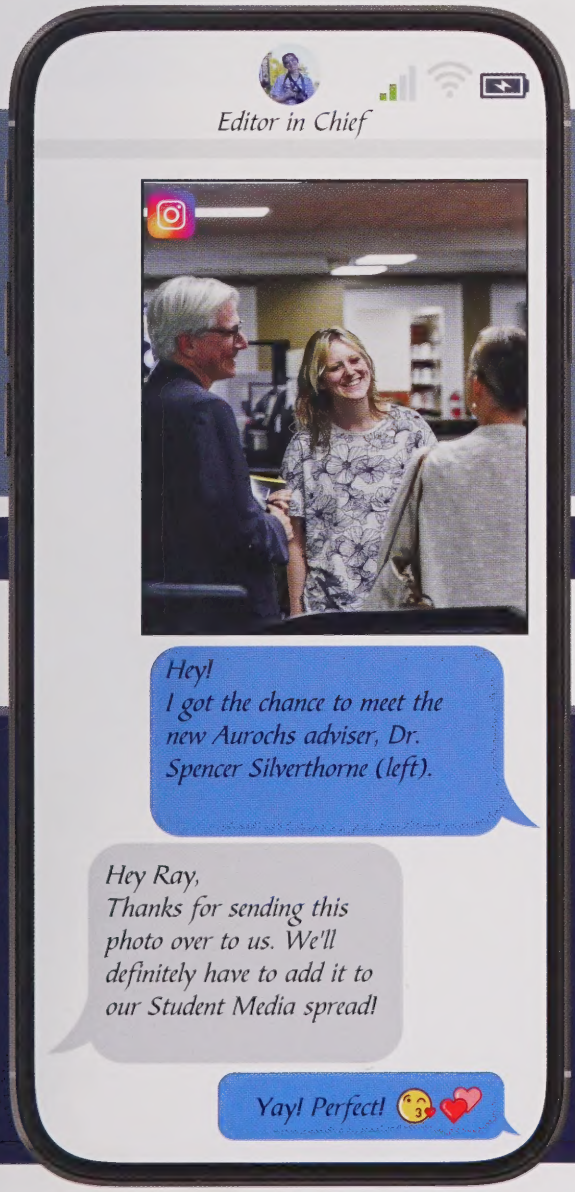
The Pine Needle

Staff of The Pine Needle student newspaper continued to emphasize their website this year but also produced a monthly eight-page tabloid. They worked with GPAC on cross-promotions of their shows. The editor-in-chief was Zackari Ciboth, and sports editor was Nick Kolsin. The faculty adviser is Dr. Darlene Natale.

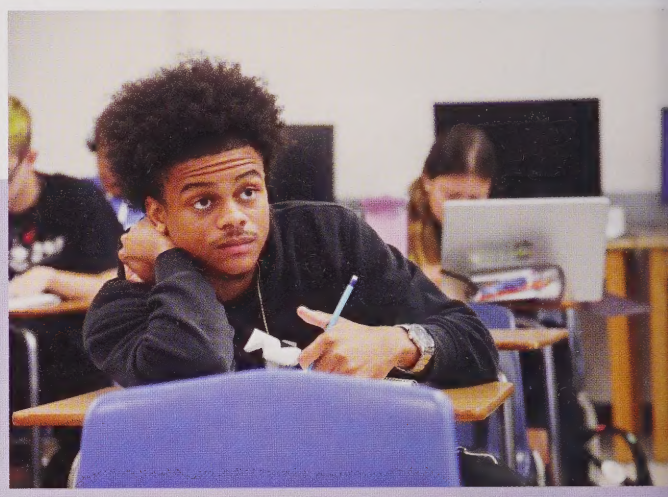
The Aurochs held a launch party in the Livermore Library on Oct. 8 for their most recent volume, with readings by the contributing writers. The volume was advised by Dr. Michael Berntsen, who has passed the torch to Dr. Spencer Silverthorne, who joined UNCP in August. The new editor-in-chief is Charles Newbegin.

Students in broadcasting started practicing to bring back their student newscast, Carolina News Today, after the TV studio re-installation of equipment and furniture is complete. **Samoya Downey** (left) and **Asa Locklear** (near left) learned how to anchor on the virtual set.

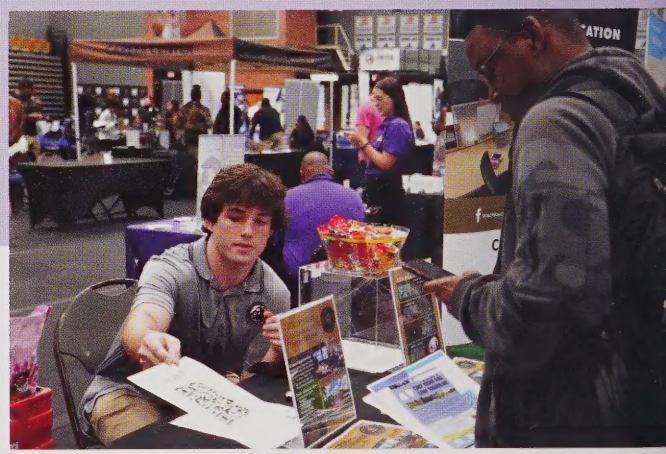
Below: Dr. Michael Berntsen (center) compliments Unmai Arokiasamy, who read one of their poems. Dr. Peter Grimes (yellow shirt) came out to enjoy the readings and show support for student work in the literary arts.


Editor in Chief
Hey!
I got the chance to meet the new Aurochs adviser, Dr. Spencer Silverthorne (left).
Hey Ray,
Thanks for sending this photo over to us. We'll definitely have to add it to our Student Media spread!
Yay! Perfect!

The Aurochs



The Department of Mass Communication celebrated the refurbishment of the TV studio in Old Main with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The lighting grid was replaced and an electrical upgrade was made to accommodate all new LED lighting instruments. The talk-show set on one side of the studio was replaced with a newly constructed set that features LED panels. Hands-on coursework in the curriculum is matched by traditional classroom instruction as well as fieldwork. **Noah Britt** (above) and **Devin McCullough** (above right) learn about some theories of mass communication and typical research methods.

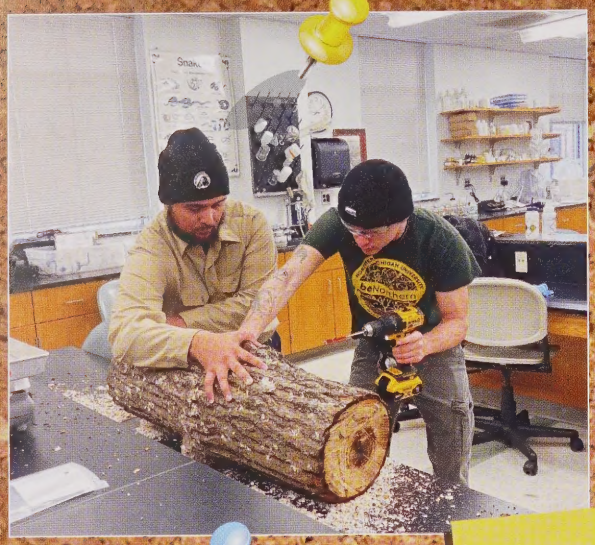


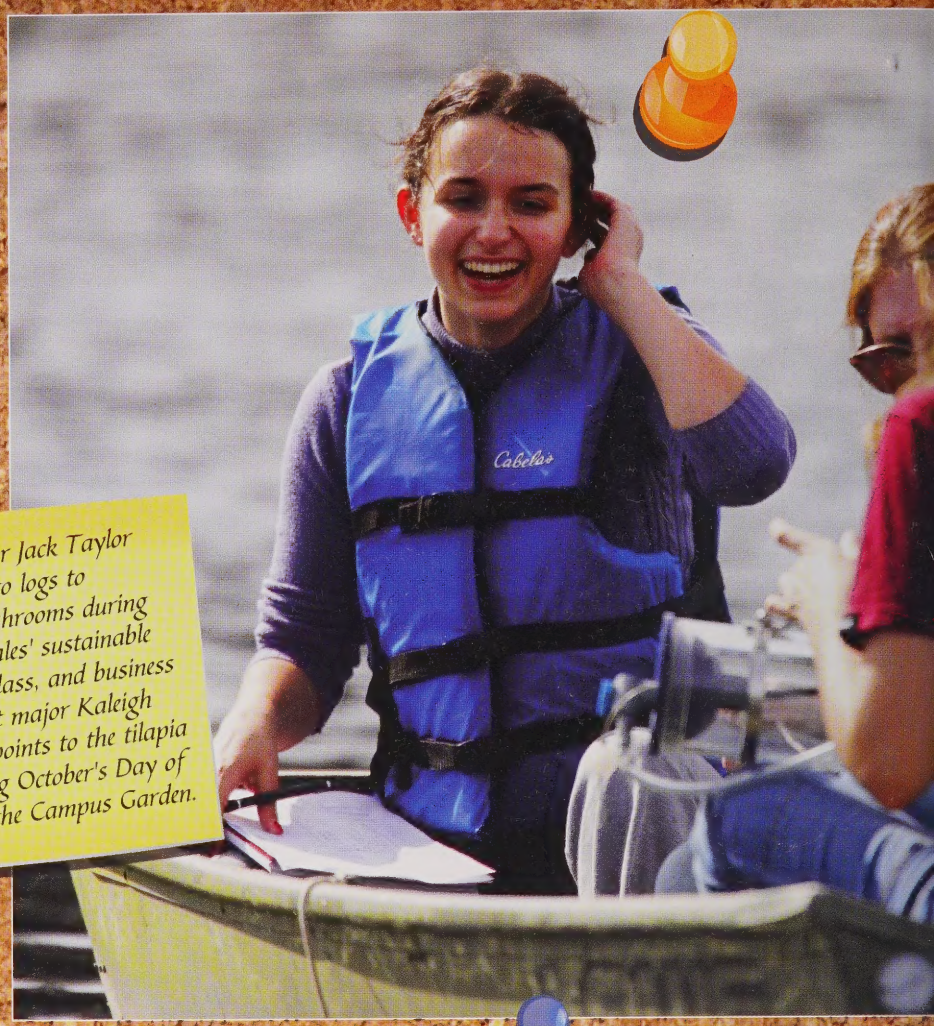
Public relations major Caleb Grau (seated) works the All Majors Career Fair as part of a promotional campaign designed by his group, "CommConnect," in their senior capstone course.

Mass communication major **Nicholas Kolsin** (left, with Dr. Jamie Litty) operates the video switcher in the remodeled studio control room that's now more spacious. He's one of many students who will major in journalism and minor in broadcasting, or vice versa. Operating the switcher for the public television series "Comic Culture," created by Professor Terence Dollard, is one way that Nick gets a professional credit before graduating. Some of his classmates work on the student TV newscast "Carolina News Today," and all students who are majoring in mass communication complete at least one three-credit internship.

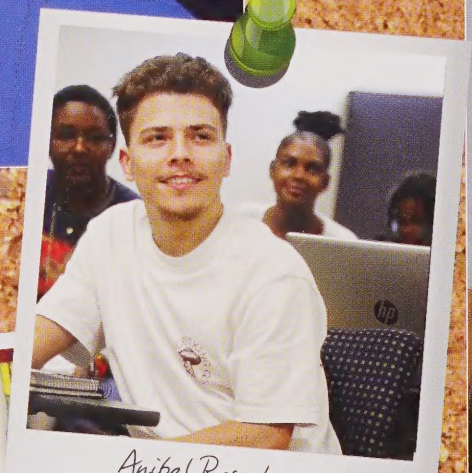
The department produces media-literate alumni who go on to work professionally in a variety of fields or pursue graduate study in marketing, sport administration, law, strategic communication and other disciplines.

UNC PEMBROKE
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
PURSUE YOUR PASSION.
GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN
Business Administration, Counseling, Education, Nursing, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Public Administration, School Administration, Sport Administration
LEARN MORE AND APPLY
FLEXIBLE programs with some 100% ONLINE and others HYBRID





Biology major Jack Taylor drills holes into logs to inoculate mushrooms during Dr. Bryan Sales' sustainable agriculture class, and business management major Kaleigh Guy (left) points to the tilapia farm during October's Day of Service at the Campus Garden.



Anibal Rosado

education major Helen Cole

Caylee Gilbert and Natalie Gillim enjoy their political science class taught by Dr. Milewicz..

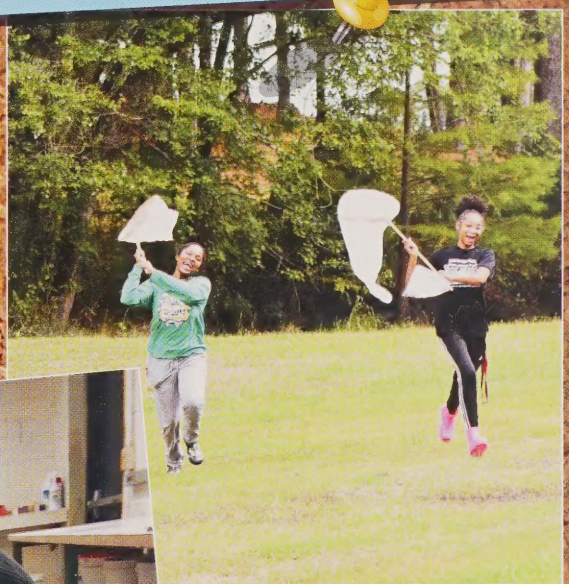
Broadcasting major Stephany Guzman (right) interviews two guests in the podcasting lab for her senior capstone course.

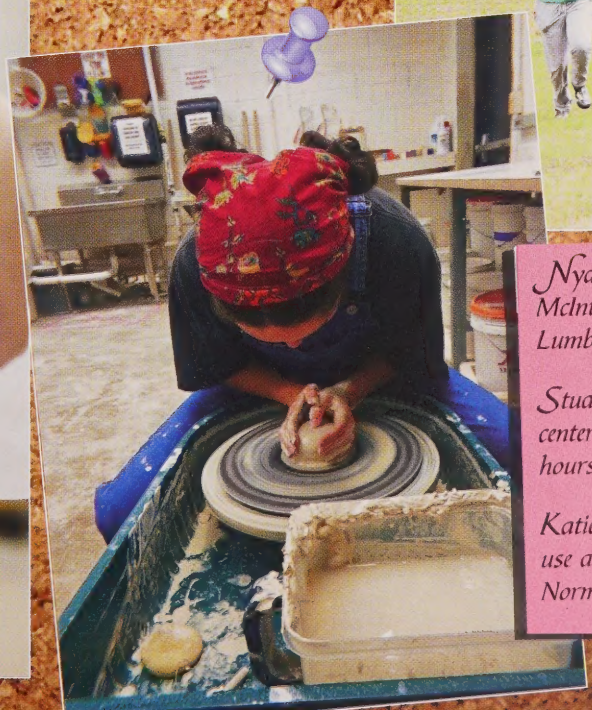
Pinned for Success

At Pembroke, academics go beyond the classroom. They're moments you truly "had to be there" to fully appreciate. From thought-provoking discussions to hands-on experiences, learning here is immersive, dynamic and impactful.

Take **Nina Wiatrowski**, for example. During her freshwater ecosystems class, she found herself in a boat, studying aquatic environments up close. It wasn't just another school day; it was a chance to connect with the natural world, apply classroom knowledge, and create memories that will stick for years to come.

This spirit of active learning defines Pembroke's academic culture. And we've got these scholarly adventures jotted down here on Post-it Notes, pinned on this virtual cork board, and captured for all of us to celebrate these milestones together. The academic journey ought to be meaningful and unforgettable, like the moments shown here.





Nyda Gardner-Geoffrey and De'Ja McIntyre pursue aerial insects at the Lumbee Tribe Cultural Center.

Studio art minor Hannah Scrattish centers her clay during open studio hours.

Katie Raleigh learns how to properly use a pipette during Dr. Brandi Norman's Biology Lab.

BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPS!

The Braves earned 719.5 points in the conference finals, edging out Emmanuel University, who finished at 713.5. Montevallo was third with 606 points. Photo Credit: Bob Stoner

The Braves became road warriors this year because of renovations that kept them out of the Sue Walsh Swimming Pool. They did not have a single home meet all season. That didn't slow them down! They finished 6-1 overall and 4-0 in Conference Carolinas. Their only one-on-one team loss was to Division 1 Campbell University.

The Braves started the season off with a pair of wins over Barton and Chowan at a tri-meet in September and then placed first at the King Invitational out of seven schools. After defeating SCAD and Lenoir-Rhyne at a tri-meet in Savannah on Nov. 8-9, the Braves found themselves on a little hiatus because of cancellations caused by lasting impacts of Hurricane Helene across the region. Back in action on Nov. 21, the 800-yard freestyle relay team set a new school record with a time of 7:39.72 at the Queens University Fall Frenzy, which included some Division 1 schools.

In the team loss to Campell, Fatima Portillo was first in the 200-yard butterfly (2:09.16), and Fabiana Pesce won the 100-yard butterfly (1:00.07). The Braves closed out the last competition of the year with wins over King and Converse, in a tri-meet where Kaeleigh Cupples broke her own school record with her first-place finish in the 100-yard IM, with a time of 1:01.52. The Braves started preparing for the Conference Carolinas Championships, Feb. 19-22 in Cary.

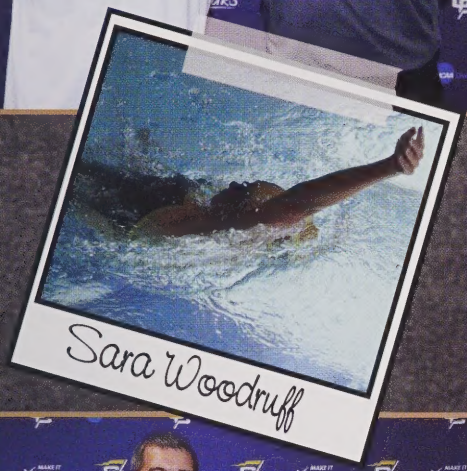
Despite dropping to second place as a team on the second day, they reclaimed the top spot on day three and never looked back! Sofia Pereira broke the school record and conference record in the 1650-yard freestyle event (17:16.07), finishing first. She was also named Freshman of the Year.

(cont. top of next page)

Oscar Roverato accepts the Coach of the Year award.

(cont. from previous page)

The 200-yard relay team came in first with a school-record time of 1:34.80, and **Benedetta Pepe Pugliese** (opposite page, bottom) was first in the 200-yard breaststroke (2:19.34). She went on to the national championships for the second year in a row. Britta Schwengle was on the top podium for the 200-yard freestyle (1:52.45), and Ianna Gomez Veloz also enjoyed that spotlight in the 100-yard breaststroke (1:04.76). Top-three finishes like these across all four days earned the Braves their second-straight conference championship title!



Sara Woodruff

Sofia Pereira is named Freshman of the Year.

Gretchen & Nina

Britta Schwengle

SCOREBOARD

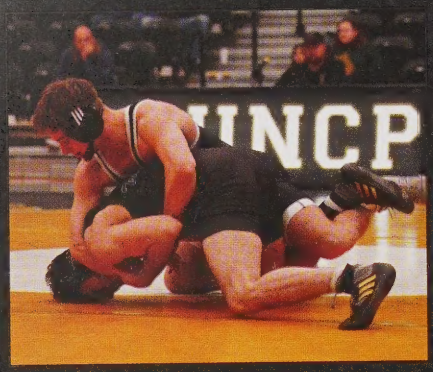
UNCP	EVENT	OPP
169	Barton	146
169	Chowan	56
1st	King Invitational	6th
67.0	SCAD-Savannah	58.0
94.0	Lenoir-Rhyne	31.0
12th	Queens Fall Frenzy	13th
80	Campbell	179
152.5	King	42.5
124	Converse	75
1st	CC Championship	8th

Fatima Portillo

Ella Humbert

BECOMING BRAVETOUGH

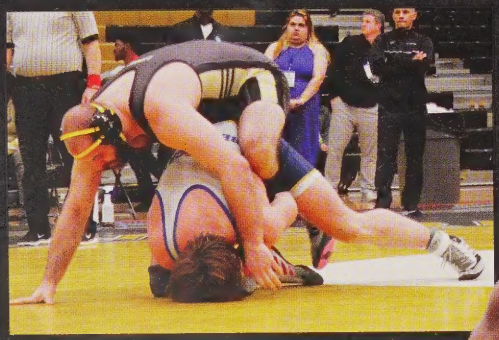
The UNCP wrestling squad kicked off their campaign with an impressive performance in the newly renamed PJ Smith Pembroke Classic on Nov. 23, where they had 21 wrestlers place inside the top five. The Braves went on to a 3-0 start in Conference Carolinas, with wins over University of Montevallo, King University and Bluefield State.



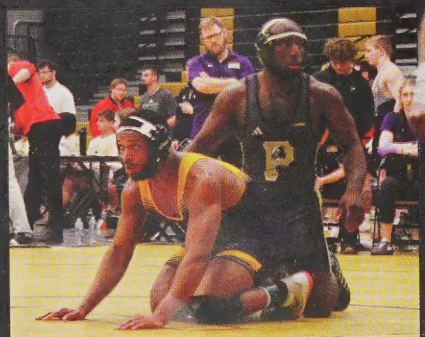
The Carolina Clash on Dec. 1 in Greenwood, South Carolina, had results the Braves didn't want to see, with team losses to sixth-ranked Glenville State, Ashland University and #15 Lander, but they picked up a 51-6 win over Lincoln Memorial. That didn't kill the momentum for the Braves, who tied for 32nd out of 43 teams in the Midwest Classic and then blanked Limestone University on Jan. 2 at home.

The Braves went back and forth with wins and losses in January, but nabbed three individual titles as hosts of the BraveTough Open: Joey Bruscino (125 lbs.), Logan Robinson (133) and Nigel Williams (197). Seventeen wrestlers placed in the top five. The team had a decisive 41-3 victory over Coker University on Feb. 7 on the road, where Joey Bruscino won a major decision, followed by a first-period pin by Logan Robinson. Also racking up pins were Mason Diemert (184) and Massimo Sullivan (285).

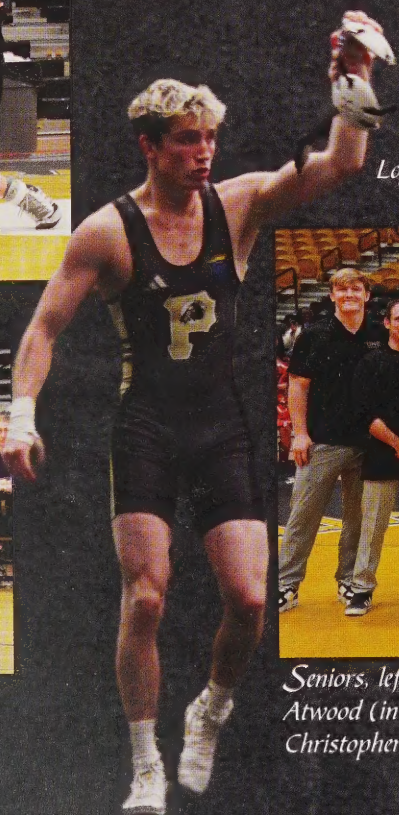
Despite not qualifying for the Conference Carolinas Championships, the Braves turned their attention to hosting the NCAA Super Region II Championships on March 1. In the all-day event in the Jones Center, the Braves finished second overall out of 13 teams and saw three wrestlers punch their tickets to the NCAA Division II finals: Oggie Atwood (285), who had a perfect day and won the individual title, Jake Piccirilli (149) and Logan Robinson. As this book is finalized, those three are getting ready to compete in Indianapolis. It's the ninth-straight year that UNCP has earned spots for multiple wrestlers at the finals.



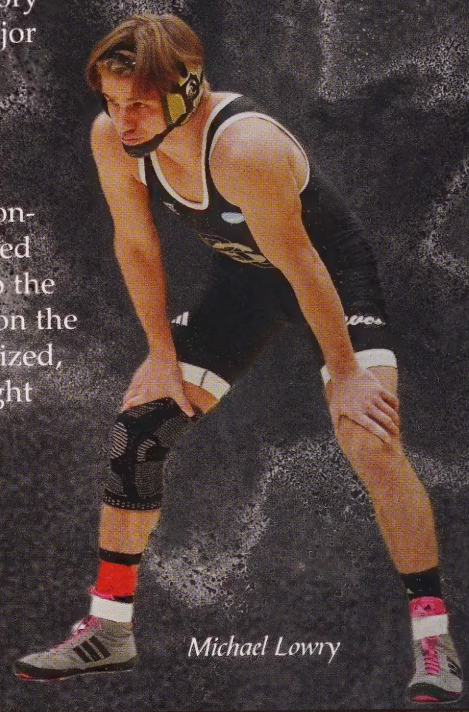
Oggie Atwood



Christopher Dickey

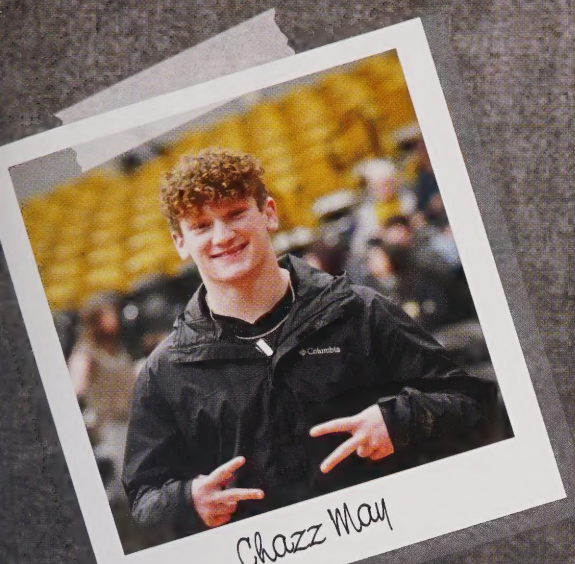


Logan Robinson

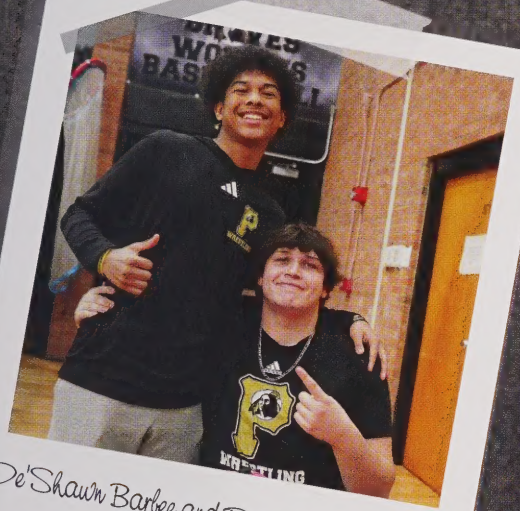


Michael Lowry

Seniors, left to right (holding trophies): Cody Williams, Shylik Scriven, Oggie Atwood (in the back), Jake Piccirilli, Cameron Greene, Andres Silva (back), Christopher Dickey, Massimo Sullivan, Malcolm Gray



Chazz May



De'Shawn Barbee and Daniel Karmanov

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
NTS	PJ Smith Pembroke Classic	NTS
31	Montevallo	9
NTS	Georgia Open	NTS
21	King	19
42	Bluefield State	3
NTS	King Open	NTS
NTS	Lucha Open	NTS
11	Glenville State	33
51	Lincoln Memorial	6
12	Ashland	26
14	Lander	34
32nd	Midwest Classic	43
54	Limestone	0
31	Lake Erie	11
16	Pitt-Johnstown	24
48	Allen	3
NTS	BraveTough Open	NTS
NTS	Wasps Open	NTS
21	Newberry	22
20	Mount Olive	19
10	Belmont Abbey	34
NTS	Newberry Open	NTS
41	Coker	3
2nd	NCAA Super Region II	13

Top row left to right: Massimo Sullivan, Cristian Hercules-Pleitez, Omari Figueroa, Perry Riggle, Camryn Pettigrew, Jake Piccirilli, Theo Yager, Chance Cottingham, Tyler Nelson, De'Shawn Barbee, Jackson Buck, Kiyon Brown, Oggie Atwood, Chris Steen, Trystan Richardson,

Second row: Daniel Karmanov, Curtis Johnson, Chazz May, Mike Lowry, Landen Nelson, Logan Johnson, Bryson Harper, Keegan Roberson, Chad Metikosh, Cris Salgado Mejia, Donovan Miller, Avery Buonocore, Spencer May, Jose Zambrano Canuto, Quintez Shipman

Third row left to right, Logan Hoffman, Christian DeFronzo, Aspen Talbot, David Varner, Sam Bartholomew, Cody Williams, Bryce Gadson, Shylik Scriven, Will Lowery, Hunter Macklin, Christopher Dickey, Mason Diemert, David Varner, Andres Silva

Bottom row: Joey Bruscino, Gus Elliott, Fernando Martinez, Cameron Greene, Malachi Cobb, Nigel Williams, Tkaii Gaither, Kobe Masingale, Chris Steen, Malcolm Gray, Sam Hutchison, Logan Robinson

THE BEGINNING OF AN ERA

"Coming back, I understood what the family atmosphere was here," says Dr. Kendra Samuels-Eaton. She's in her first year as head coach of the women's basketball team. She originally served as an assistant coach from 2017-2021. "I enjoy the diverse community here, not only on campus but in Pembroke. So why not come back to a great town and a great university?"

The first season of the Samuels-Eaton era was a success for the Black and Gold, who started the season hot with a 5-1 record. They picked up wins over Wingate, Georgia Southwestern, Anderson, and Fayetteville State during that stretch. Not only was the season-opening victory against Wingate special for the team (their first win against the Bulldogs in 11 meetings), but it was also the first win for Samuels-Eaton as the Braves head coach.

Early in the season, Zaria Clark joined the 1,000-point club, and the Braves were ranked in the top 25. They kept the momentum going as they played in and out of conference and got hot at the right time. In a 70-52 win against Mount Olive, Kelci Adams became the program's all-time career 3-point record-holder with 190 three-pointers at that point in the season. In a 68-55 win over Chowan at home, Adams added another milestone by joining the 1,000 career-points club. The Braves closed out the season with a 22-9 record overall and went 15-5 in Conference Carolinas. They claimed the fourth seed in the conference championship.

In a second-round win against Barton, Natalie Evington set a new school record for the most 3-pointers made in a single game (8). The Braves fell in a quarterfinal thriller against Young Harris that went into overtime. At the NCAA Southeast Regional, the Braves battled to the very last minute but came up short against University of North Georgia, the No. 1 seed.

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
60	Wingate	56
52	Coker	64
69	Anderson	64
84	Georgia Southwest	59
63	Fayetteville St.	56
73	Erskine	60
46	Belmont Abbey	55
58	Lees-McRae	52
72	Virginia Union	56
70	Mount Olive	52
68	Elizabeth City St.	53
70	Shorter	66
51	Winston-Salem St.	59
70	Erskine	48
56	Barton	46
55	King	49
60	Chowan	54
58	Belmont Abbey	62
64	Converse	59
78	Barton	63
73	Emmanuel	52
77	Francis Marion	78
45	Young Harris	59
68	Chowan	55
75	S. Wesleyan	62
48	Francis Marion	56
60	North Greenville	52
67	Mount Olive	39
84	Barton	35
67	Young Harris	75
64	North Georgia	78

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

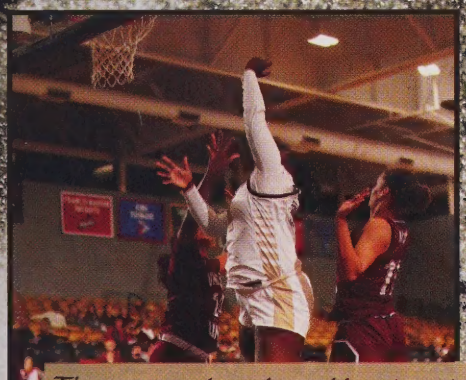
Top left to right: DeNaira Williams, Jianna Holmes, Nadia vonReichbauer, Amanda Sacoto, Tiana Spann, Amazriah Rawls, Maya Hood, Jykya Bell, Natalie Evington

Bottom left to right: Tamia Morris, Stella Mollica, Kelci Adams, Hannah Russell, Malea Garrison, Zaria Clark, Anastasia Sinclair

The Braves celebrate Stella Mollica's three-pointer in the victory against Virginia Union University.

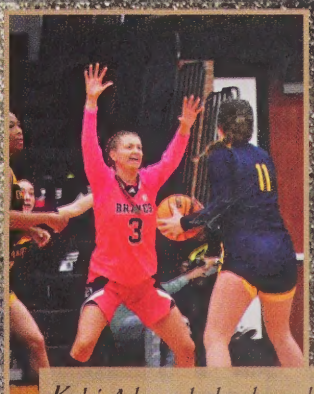
Stella Mollica stares down her opponent in a close game against Francis Marion University.

Natalie Evington shoots her record-breaking 8th three-pointer in 84-35 win over Barton.



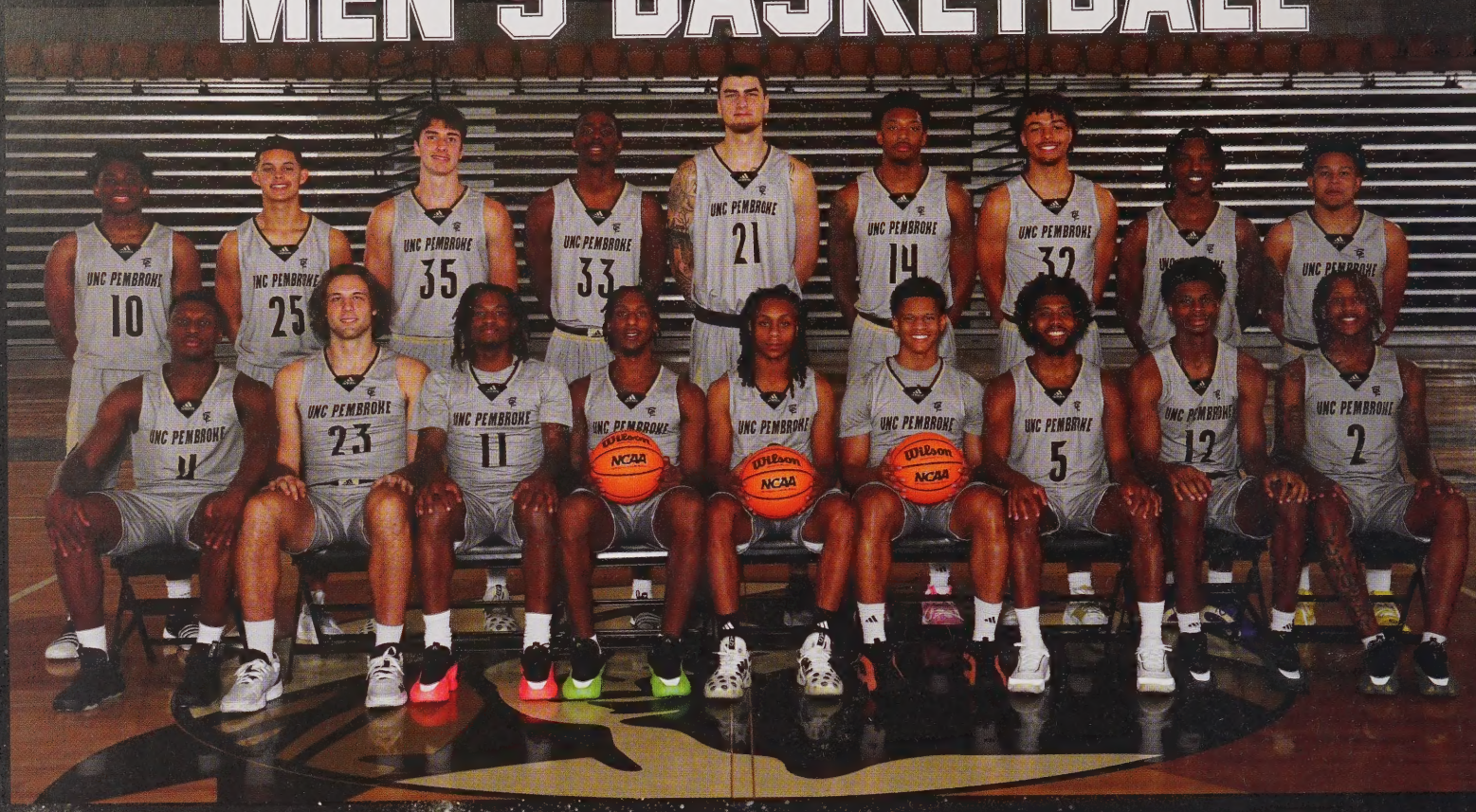
Tiana Spann drives by and lays it up in between two Virginia Union defenders.

Anastasia Sinclair



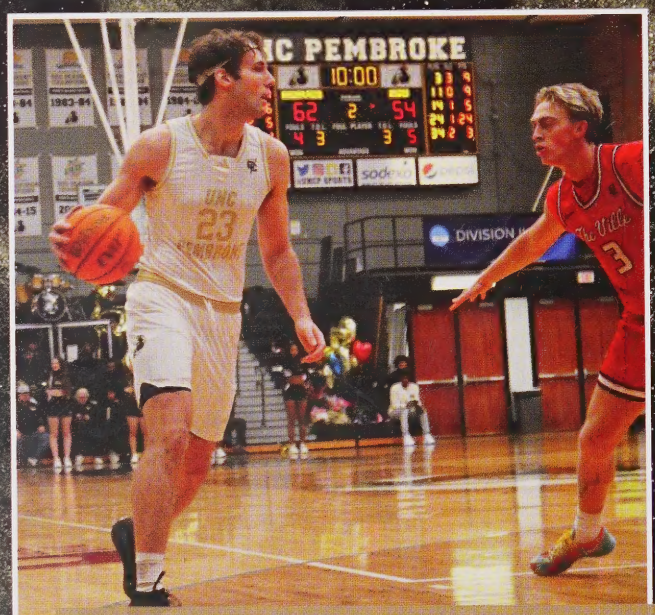
Kelci Adams locks down her defender in a game against Emmanuel.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

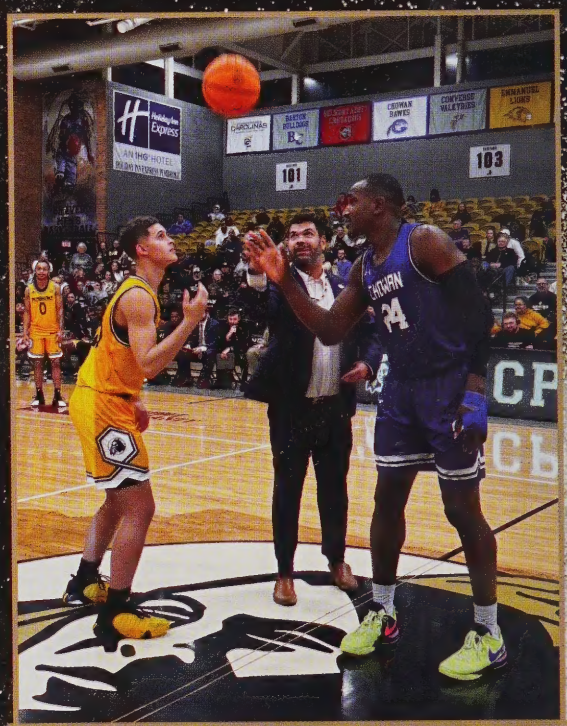


Top, left to right: Quay Watson, Connor Harris, Peyton Mann, Kaleb James, Jonathan Kurtis, Joe'l Pettiford, Steven Lassiter, Will Brown, Josh Bullock

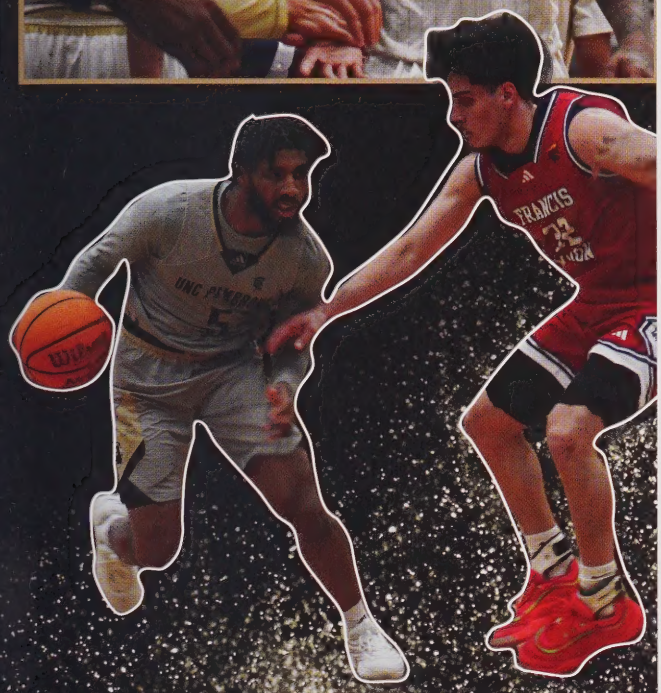
Bottom : JT Thomas, Josh Berenbaum, Demar Anderson, Nygell Verdier, Bradlee Haskell, JaJuan Carr, Ant Abraham, Elijah Cobb, Dallas Gardner



Josh Berenbaum looks for a man open as the Braves lead North Greenville in the second half. The Braves went on to win, 88-70.



Connor Harris partakes in the ceremonial tip-off against Chowan on Tribe Night. The freshman landed a 3-pointer in his two minutes of game time.



Ant Abraham makes his way down the court heavily guarded by FMU Patriots.

SCOREBOARD

UNCP	GAME	OPP
59	Ferris State	81
70	West Texas A&M	77
87	USC Aiken	101
93	Lander	74
75	Fayetteville State	76
83	Lincoln Memorial	75
94	Erskine	64
92	Belmont Abbey	62
89	Lees-McRae	79
105	Mount Olive	66
91	Shorter	57
61	Erskine	57
83	Barton	77
97	King	63
87	Chowan	88
82	Belmont Abbey	60
68	Converse	76
97	Barton	65
92	Emmanuel	81
78	Francis Marion	67
78	Virginia State	62
86	Young Harris	66
94	Chowan	63
111	Southern Wesleyan	67
103	Francis Marion	70
88	North Greenville	70
106	Mount Olive	70
	CC Championship	
90	King	74
107	Emmanuel	91
	NCAA SE Regional	
90	Lincoln Memorial	88
91	Columbus State	80
74	Lenoir-Rhyne	76

Joe'l Pettiford dunks the ball in a 92-81 win against the Emmanuel Lions.

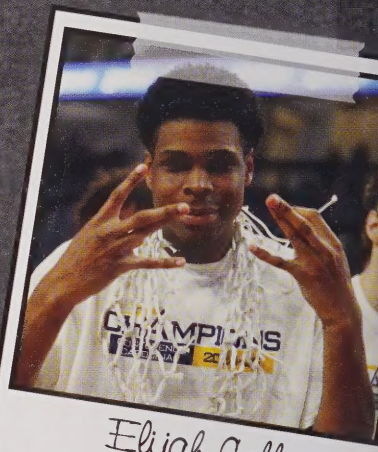
PUT IN THE WORK, REAP THE REWARDS

Before the season started, Head Coach Drew Richards wanted to make sure that his team was battle-tested, so he scheduled tough, putting some of the best teams across the country on the Braves' schedule. The early results may not have been what the Braves wanted, as they fell to #25 Ferris State, #3 West Texas A&M, USC-Aiken at home, and Fayetteville State. However, the Braves did take down Lander, where Richards coached for one year before returning to Pembroke. The biggest momentum boost for the Braves by far in the early part of the season was an upset win over #9 Lincoln Memorial, a key victory right before the Braves began conference play. The Braves turned a 1-4 start in November into a 25-7 overall record and finished 18-2 in Conference Carolinas.

The Braves had an eight-game winning streak across the conference before running into a roadblock at Chowan University, where they suffered a tight 88-87 loss. Nevertheless, they racked up victories to close out the regular season with 11 more wins that included revenge on Chowan at home on Feb. 12.

The Braves swept half of the Conference Carolinas teams they came across, and in four games this season scored 100+ points. Senior Bradlee Haskell surpassed 1,000 career points with a 21-point performance against Fayetteville State, becoming the 40th member of the program's 1,000-point club.

In the regular season finale for the Braves, a 106-70 win over the Mount Olive Trojans, the Braves secured the #1 seed for the Conference Carolinas Championship Tournament. The Braves had a bye until a semifinal bout against King, which led to a 90-74 victory. In the finals against Emmanuel, the Braves won their second conference tourney in a row with a score of 107-91. They became the 5th seed in the NCAA DII Southeast Region. The first game of the tournament for the Braves resulted in a 90-88 win against Lincoln Memorial in the final second of the game, on a layup from Josh Berenbaum. In the Southeast Regional semifinals, the Braves upset the #1 seed Columbus State, and for the first time in program history, the men advanced to the Sweet Sixteen. The Braves thrilled fans as they battled back mightily from a 19-point deficit in the second half but fell to Lenoir-Rhyne in a 76-74 overtime loss.



Elijah Cobb

Peyton, Layth, and Steven

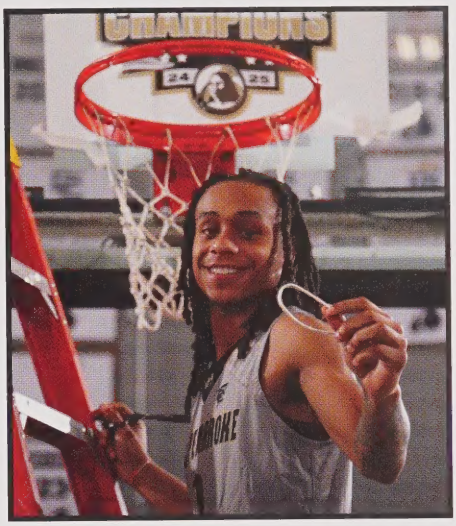
JaJuan Carr

Josh and Joe'l

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Bradlee Haskell is a senior from Southern Pines who is earning his bachelor's degree in exercise and sports science. Bradlee chose the major because of the many paths it will allow him to pursue. He has played basketball for the Braves all four seasons since being recruited from Pinecrest High School. He joined the 1,000- point club this season during a game against Fayetteville State. He also has been named All- Conference for three years straight.

When he gets breaks, Bradlee works at a golf course in Pinehurst doing maintenance. Outside of class, basketball and work, Bradlee enjoys playing video games. He says he's a competitive person, so winning a video game excites him and gets him ready for game days. He enjoys going to campus events to meet new people and show others that he's more than just an athlete, but of course the annual Golden Braves gala for student-athletes is a favorite event.

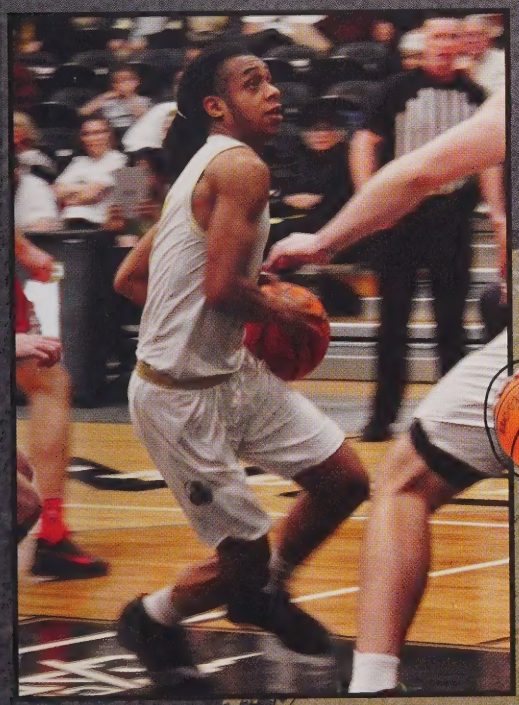


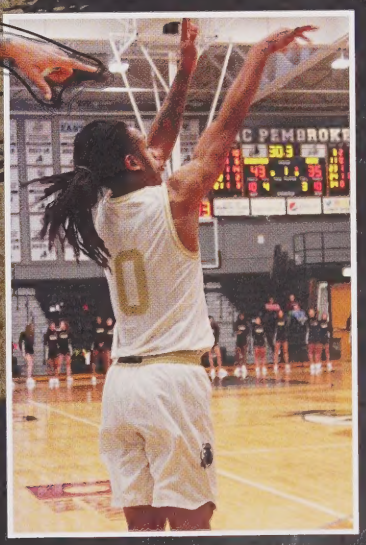
Bradlee Haskell

He knows there are people at UNCP who will continue to be significant in his life after graduation. "Everyone on the staff, men's basketball team, we have a great bond, great connection. Especially the coaches. I look forward to keeping in touch with them, building new opportunities with them in the future," Bradlee says.

Things have changed since he first came to UNCP in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. He has witnessed the student population bounce back and student activities expand. Being a senior is bittersweet. An indescribable moment at UNCP for Bradlee was winning the conference tournament his junior year. He calls it one of the biggest accomplishments. His advice to incoming freshmen is "to not worry about everything else that comes with being a college student; just keep the main goal the main goal."

--Profiled by Alyssa Branch

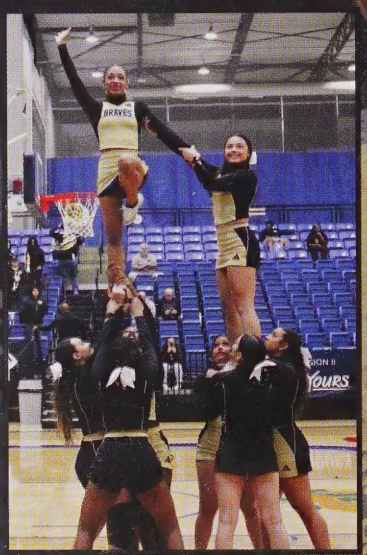




HOW SWEET IT IS!

"Though the overtime period didn't end as we had hoped, the pride and resilience displayed on that court — both by our team and by those cheering them on — will be remembered for years to come. You made the journey, you made the noise, and you made a difference."

--Dick Christy, UNCP Athletic Director



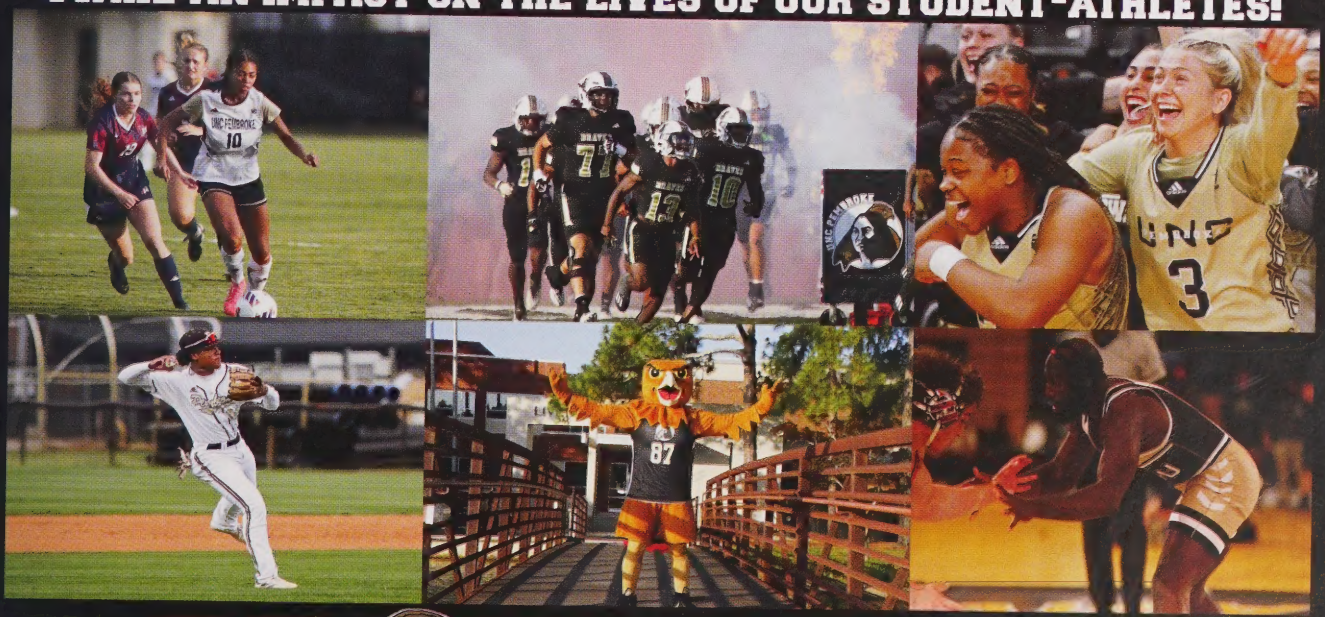
SWEET SIXTEEN

Nutrition Station

Dick Christy presents the Braves Club Members of the Year Award.

A newly installed nutrition station for student-athletes was dedicated with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sept. 13 in honor of university trustee Karen L. Sampson and her husband Kelvin Sampson, both alumni of Pembroke State University, in recognition of continuing philanthropy at UNCP. Kelvin is the head coach of the University of Houston men's basketball team and a UNCP Athletic Hall of Famer. The station provides healthy snacks and educational resources to promote lifelong good eating habits. The couple was also presented with the award for Braves Club Members of the Year. Karen Sampson worked on the Indianhead yearbook as an undergrad here in the 1970s! The family has also endowed a men's basketball scholarship at Pembroke.

MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES!



BRAVES CLUB

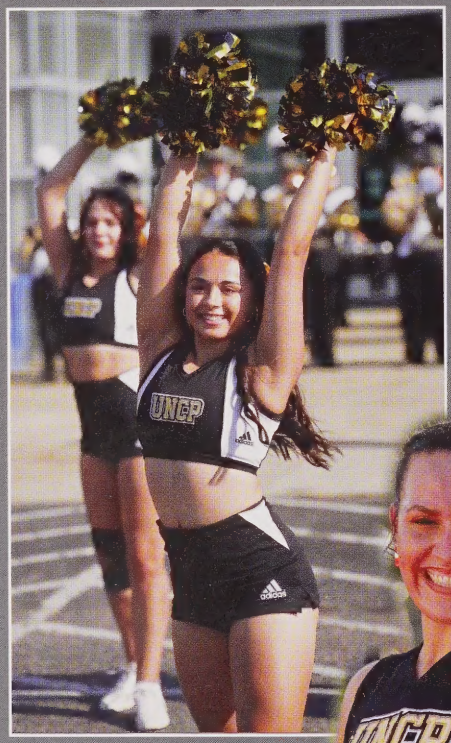
CONTACT BRAVESCLUB@UNCP.EDU FOR MORE INFORMATION!

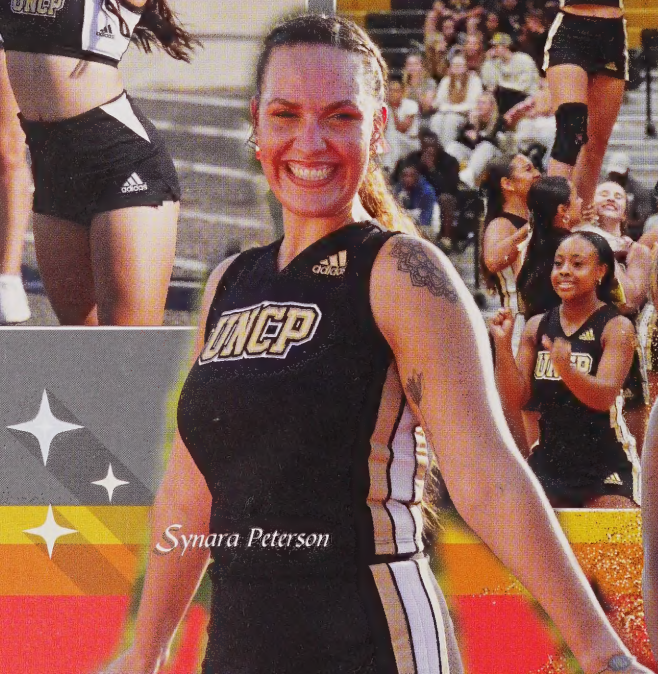
WE'VE GOT SPIRIT HOW ABOUT YOU?

Above: Abby Brunner, Aaliyah Baxley, Gloriest Lubamba, Synara Peterson, and Rakyah Jacobs are recognized on Senior Day in November.

Far right: Makaylee Emanuel, Trasuanti Bell and Adrianne Chavis are lifted high for fans to see.

Right: Blair Higley dances at Homecoming tailgating festivities.

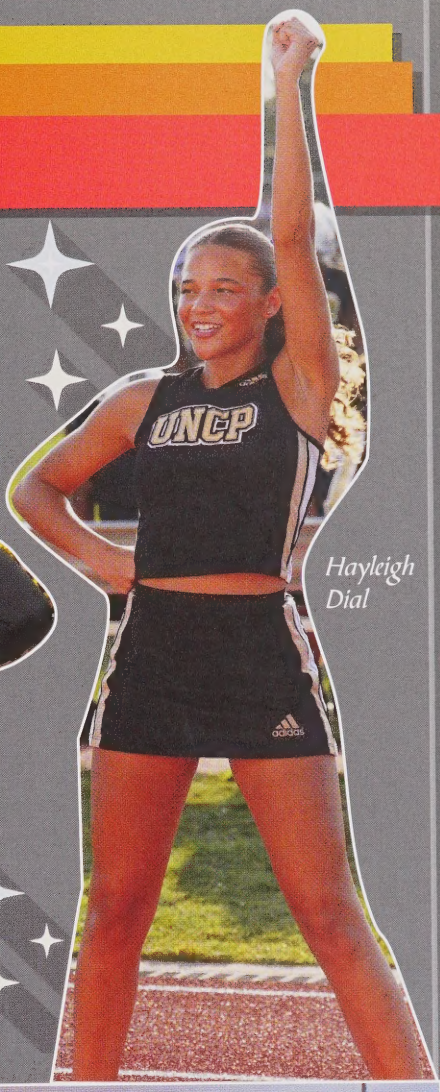




Synara Peterson

Left to right: Taylor Matthews, Rakyah Jacobs, Abby Brunner

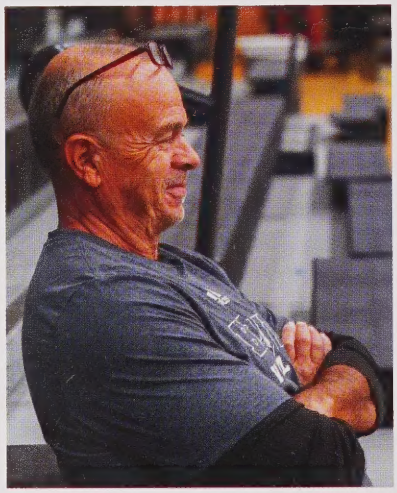
Ashia Tatem

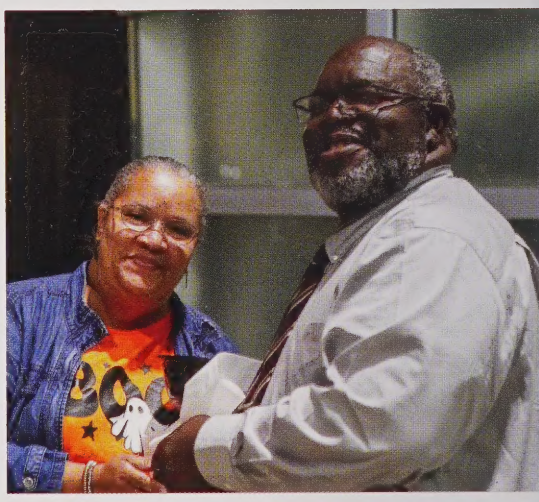


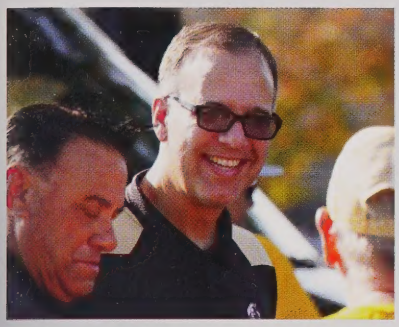
Hayleigh Dial

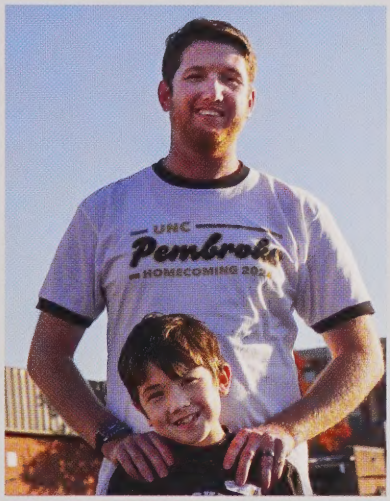
Top left to right: Jadalyn Demery, Alexandra Brown, Sarah Elmore, Savannah Brown, Zoey Woodell, Adrianne Chavis, Jayden Henderson, Hayleigh Dial, Caroline Cummings, Synara Peterson, Calista Deal.
Middle: Blair Higley, Trasuanti Bell, Aaliyah Baxley, Maya Dyonne, Gloriest Lubamba, Aiyana Strickland, Makaylee Emanuel, Amya George, Olivia Sellers, Lauren Rogitz.
Bottom: Madi Davis, Taylor Matthews, Sydney Strickland, Rakyah Jacobs, Abby Brunner, Ashia Tatem, Eryca Whitelaw, Briana Chavis.

Supporting Dreams

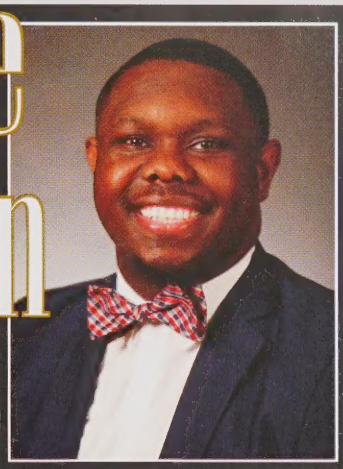








Bruce Morton



Assistant Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life

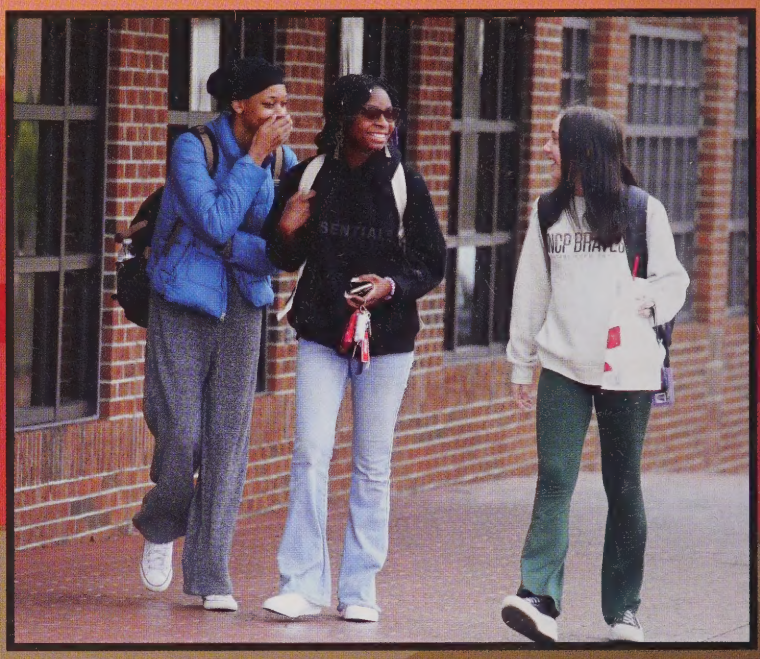
Bruce Morton, from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, is fostering change in the Greek life community at UNCP. After spending two and a half years at Howard University in a similar role, Morton moved back to the South to bring fresh ideas to Pembroke. He started working here in March of 2024.

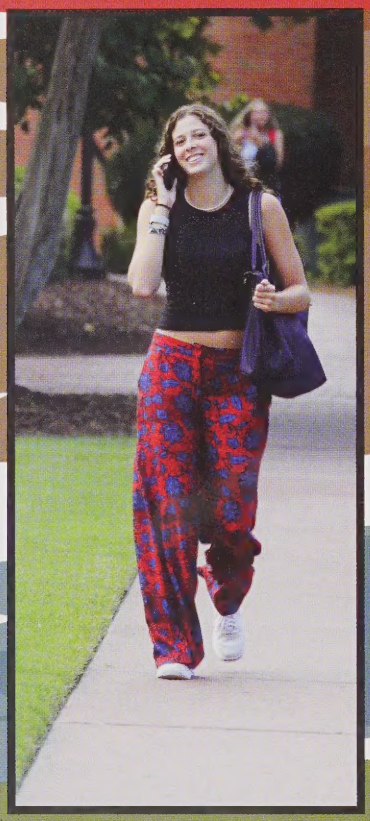
At UNCP Morton oversees 17 Greek organizations across five councils, such as Interfraternity Council, Diversified Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council and Hok Nosai. Morton's role involves planning and implementing events, managing intake and new member presentations, organizing community service initiatives, and collaborating with student organizations to enhance campus life.

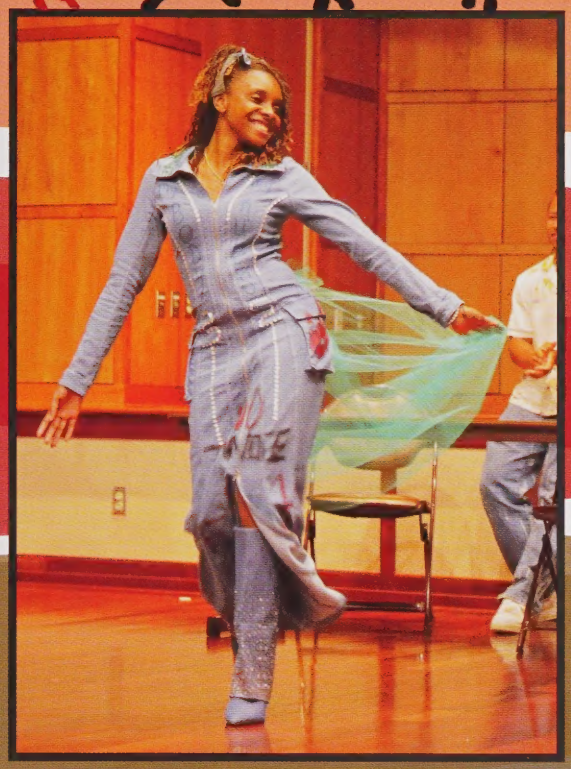
For students looking to get involved, Morton emphasizes Meet the Greeks as his "Ya' Had To Be There" event, which is held on the first Friday of the new school year. Greek life runs deep in his family, with 31 relatives in Omega Psi Phi. He took a different path as an undergrad at Fayetteville State University, where he connected with brothers of Kappa Alpha Psi in an inexplicable bond. "We all crossed together and we're all best friends to this day," he said. What he loves most about working here is the students. "They make every day interesting, and at the end of the day, we're a family."

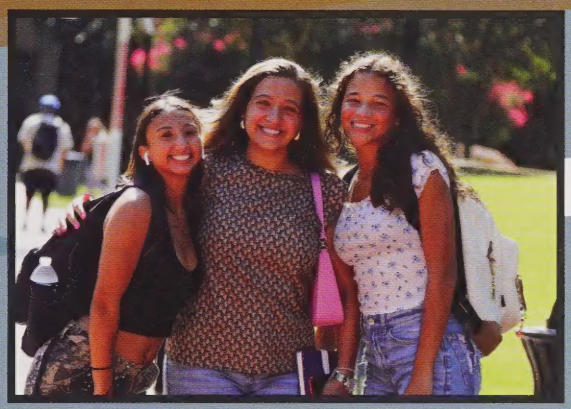
--Profiled by Jalayna Pough

FIT CHECK!









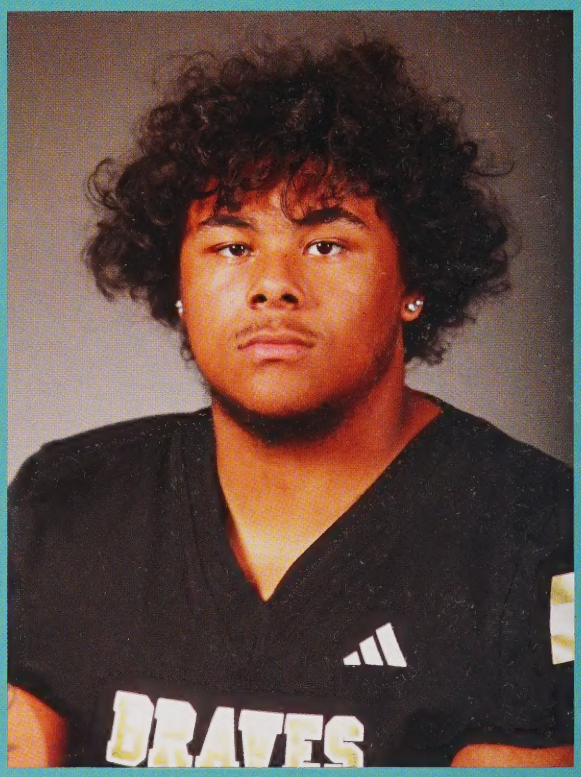
Cameron Berry, also known as "Cam Bam Berry" or just Cam, is a junior from Dumfries, Virginia. He lived there all his life with his parents and older sister Autumn, up until he moved for college. He originally went to Chowan University in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, and made the football team, but then he transferred to UNCP in the spring of 2023, along with other players following head coach Mark Hall.

Cameron began playing football at a young age and plays defensive tackle for the Braves. "Chowan is small compared to UNCP, especially the athletic training facilities," he says. "I love it here. It allowed me to break a little bit more out of my shell and connect with people and helped me create better social skills." He has met people here who he thinks will be significant in his life. Still, Cameron was able to continue his friendships with quarterback Caleb Pierce and Donavin Hansberry, who both also transferred from Chowan.

Cameron lives at Courtyard, and his major is cybersecurity. He says computers and coding have always intrigued him. "I also have lots of resources in that field that will help me and set me up in the future." Cameron likes to pass the time hanging with friends, playing video games and working out. He says he's a firm follower of Christ.

His advice for freshmen is, "Try to put yourself out there more. Stay focused on classes and assignments, but don't forget to have fun and enjoy the college experience." Among his "Ya' Had To Be There" events is Moonlight Madness every October, where the men's and women's basketball teams get to show off their skills and get the fans ready for their upcoming season.

--Profiled by Vaughn Brown



Cameron Berry

"Try to put yourself out there more. Stay focused on classes and assignments, but don't forget to have fun and enjoy the college experience."

Sophomore Mariah Spencer is a distance runner who came to UNCP from Gray's Creek High School in Fayetteville. She's originally from Eufaula, Alabama. She says she likes running because it gives her a connection to nature. Thinking of the scenery around her helps Mariah stay positive while adjusting to the more taxing elements of college athletics.

"Training at the college level takes some getting used to, but thinking of the nature around me helps me adapt," she says. This year she competed for the Braves' cross country team, including completion of the 5K at the Greensboro Cross Country Invitational (25:42.75) and at the Chanticleer Challenge (24:06.4) in Conway, South Carolina. During her freshman year she also ran the 800-meter for the outdoor track and field team.

"Mariah is a special kind of person," says track and field teammate Sean Townes. "She always keeps a good mood and has been a very uplifting friend outside of running. Coming in as freshmen last year, we've done a lot of growing since then," he says.

"I really just try to keep the same positive outlook on running and pass it on to my teammates," Mariah says. She has aspirations to convert to sprinting and hopes to continue to learn from Sean and the rest of the track team.

Mariah is pursuing a degree in education with a major in birth-to-kindergarten, but she originally declared the math major, which makes sense. "I'm a stats-oriented person, so yes, I pay attention to numbers," Mariah says, but she cautions athletes, "We can't get lost in that stuff. We all have to run our own races — in sports and in life."

Her advice to underclassmen? "Younger runners should leave high school behind and focus on the room for improvement in their college career. Remember not to compare yourself to others because everyone has their own process."

--Profiled by Zaiheim Lang

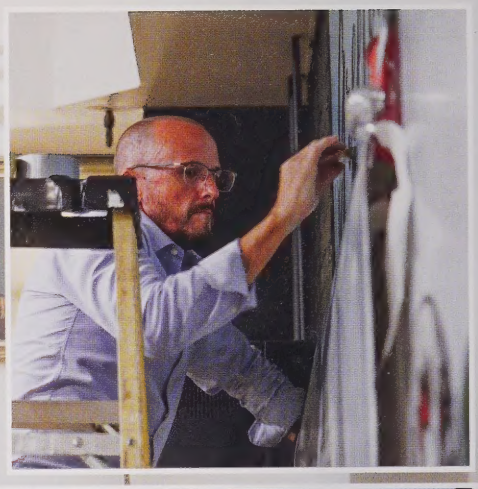
Mariah Spencer

"We all have to run our own races — in sports and in life. Remember not to compare yourself to others, because everyone has their own process."

student Profiles

Fresh New Features

...PROUDLY STANDS
OUR ALMA MATER
COURAGEOUS,
STRONG, AND TRUE



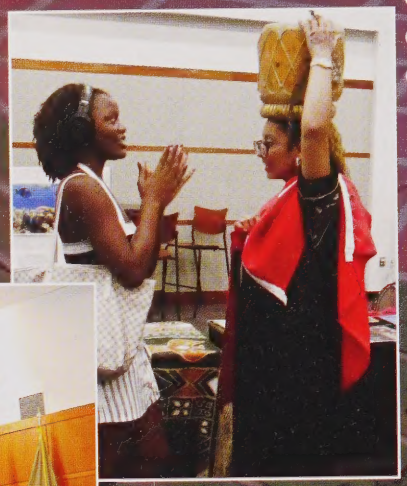
In the James B. Chavis Student Center the walls have gained new artwork. The "Greetings from BraveNation" mural was designed by Shalee Falder and Olivia "liv" Stafford. The installation was done by **Mark Fritz** (right). The Student Center also added some lyrics from our Alma Mater to the walls. Now students can glance up for a daily reminder of what we strive for at our "soul mother," UNCP.

As you walk around you can see big improvements to our campus. Our new intramural sports field has gone from natural grass to an evergreen turf. Surrounding the field is the construction for the baseball and softball complex. The athletes will soon be able to practice skills in the new facilities without worrying about the weather conditions. New seats were added to both stands, and improved concession areas will welcome you in. To get active, you can use the new pickleball modification to the tennis courts.

YOU SHOULD BE *HERE*

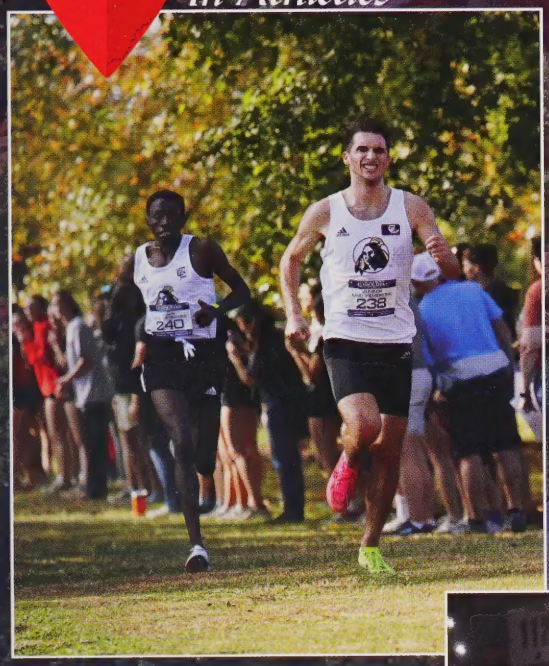
Pembroke is more than just a spot on the map—it's an experience. With its rich culture and tight-knit community, it's a place where traditions live on, and every student can develop a sense of belonging. Academics challenge and inspire, pushing students to reach their potential while building connections with classmates. Athletics unite us, from the stands to the field, creating moments of pride. Students are encouraged to get involved, forging friendships and making lasting memories. Whether in class, on the field, or within campus life, the spirit of UNCP fuels us to make moments that matter every day and will drive us throughout our futures.

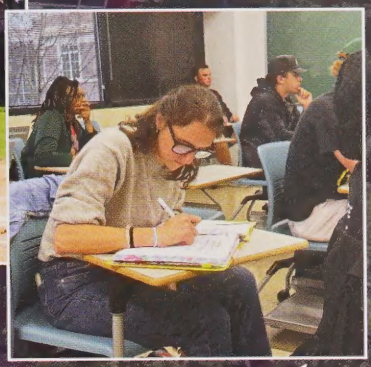
In Culture



In Community

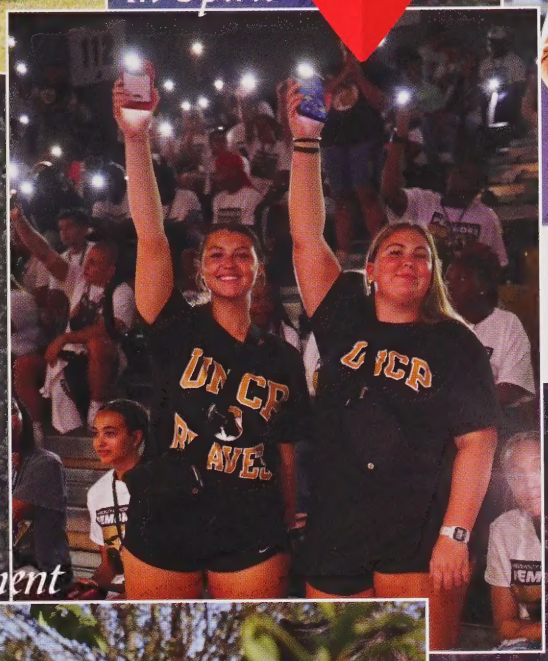
In Athletics



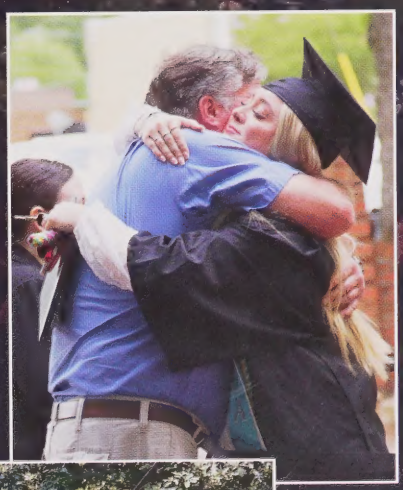


In Academics

In Spirit



In Involvement

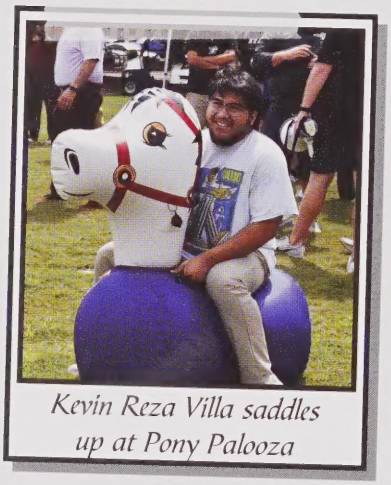


Been There

ABBA Tribute Show
Aux Cord Wars
Bark in the Park
BraveNation Bash
BraveNation Powwow
Convocation
Festival at Old Main
Holiday Extravaganza
Homecoming Tailgate
Homecoming Parade
Late Night Exam Breakfast
Lighting of Old Main
Lumbee Homecoming
Meet the Greeks
Moonlight Madness
Native Foodways
PAC Talent Show
Pembroke Day
Pippin
Pony Palooza
Senior Recital
Special Olympics
Step Show
Strike at the Wind
The Winter's Tale
Trunk or Treat
Volunteer Fair

ABBA Tribute Show at GPAC

Anesu Mavhiya volunteers on Community Action Day.



Kevin Reza Villa saddles up at Pony Palooza

Equipment manager Layth Allan enjoys Moonlight Madness.

Elliora Lorenzen and Macy Freeman watch the Homecoming Parade.

Done That

Alaqua Jacobs and Magally Ortiz-Orjas at SGA Inauguration

Marilynn Sinclair at the "Tie Dye and Dippin' Dots" event

- Played an intramural sport
- Voted for SGA representatives
- Tabled for your student organization
- Volunteered through UNCP Serve
- Went for a late-night Cookout run
- Played in the snow on campus
- Registered late for classes
- Switched roommates
- Stayed in the library until closing
- Ate at Sodexo's Fried Chicken Friday
- Won UNCP merchandise
- Bowled for free at the Hawks Nest
- Sang at a school event
- Used ChatGPT for an assignment
- Slept through your 8 AMs
- Traveled to an athletic tournament
- Went to a senior art show
- Tie-dyed Pembroke swag
- Emailed to get a homework extension
- Watched the Superbowl in the SC
- Rented a campus bike
- Forgot to call your mom
- Benefited from the food pantry
- Worked an on-campus job
- Shook the chancellor's hand
- Read the Pine Needle newspaper
- Crashed at a friend's dorm
- Dated someone you met at UNCP
- Ran out of Flex Dollars
- Submitted something to the Aurochs
- Pledged a fraternity or sorority

WCU Students

Notice from WCU Emergency Services
September 28, 2024

Classes are suspended through Friday, October 4, 2024. Residence Halls and limited dining options remain open.

There are significant road/highway closures throughout the region—it's unlikely that you will be able to leave the area safely. Please stay in Jackson County.

Landline phones are available in the UC on campus for you to make short calls to family, if needed. If you need to make a call you can go to the Help Desk on the 2nd floor of the UC from 9am-6pm.

Please stay safe!

Local first responders use inflatable rafts (right) in rescue efforts at Western Carolina University, as students are notified (left) that classes are canceled for two weeks. Photos credit: Ethan Phillips

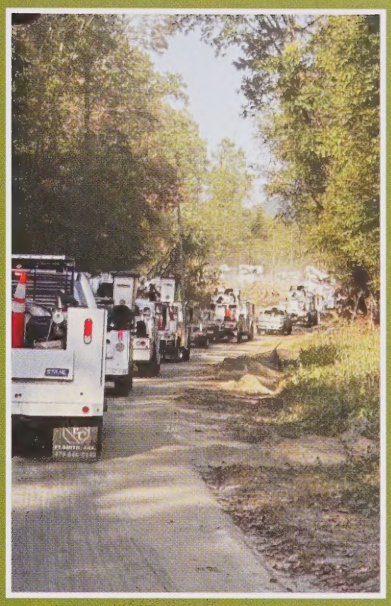
Workers cut and clean up a fallen tree in front of White Residence Hall at Appalachian State. Photo credit: Emily Sampson

App State students slide down a hill on Sanford Mall on Sept. 27. Photo credit: Emily Sampson

Mild flooding on UNCP campus. Photo Credit: Cailyn Fontaine

UNCP student Kacie Kaufman-Craig was devastated by the destruction of her family's home in Buncombe County (left).

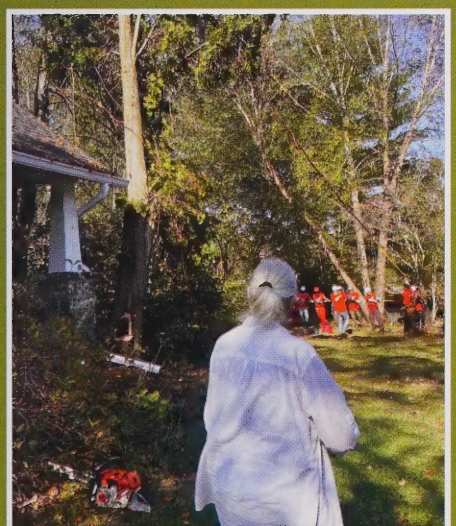
After the Storm

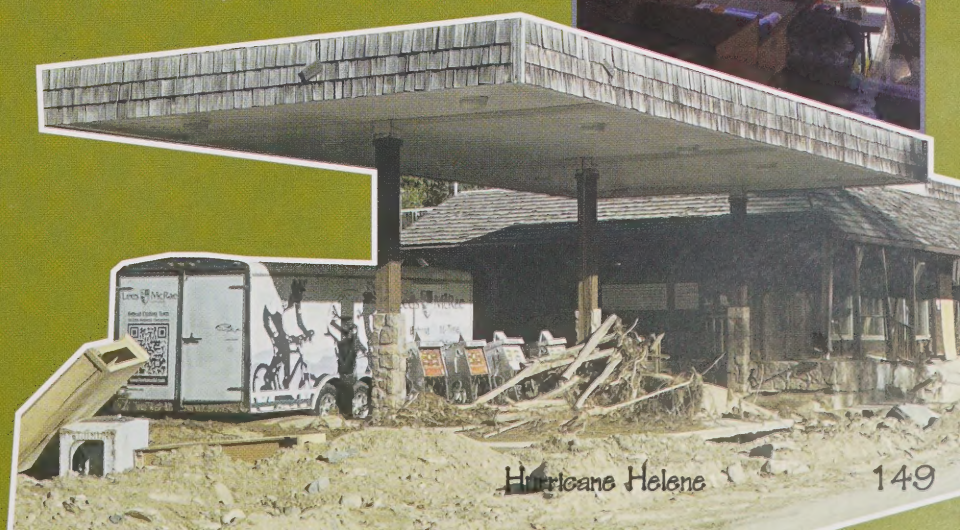


Saluda, North Carolina, welcomes utility vehicles bringing assistance to repair infrastructure and help remove debris. Photos credit: Abby Grace McDonald

Hurricane Helene brought devastating destruction to our state. On Sep. 24 it made landfall, impacting some of our sister schools, including App State, UNC-Asheville and Western Carolina. App State closed for classes for three weeks, while UNCA moved all classes to online for the remainder of fall semester. In the meantime, their students gathered in the local communities to assist with clean up and distribution of supplies. Student organizations and local churches in Pembroke were collecting supplies to send to those in need. UNCP sent police officers to sister campuses, and Chancellor Cummings opened up the university's doors, inviting students from other schools to use our resources and facilities in any way we could help. The western part of the state is still recovering to this day.

Samaritan's Purse volunteers organize donations to be flown out.





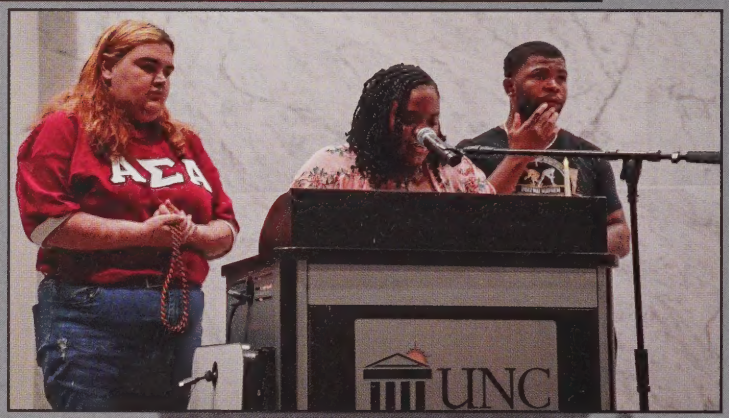
A Brave to

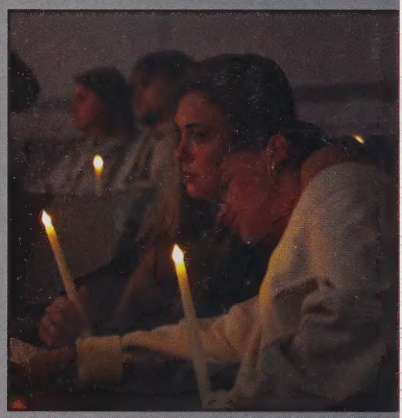
Above: Dean of Students Kyle Smith pauses for reflection before the Redemption Choir sings a spiritually comforting song.

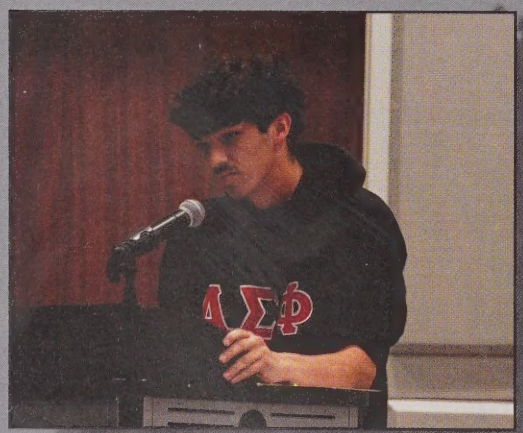
Left: Members of the fraternity and other UNCP friends gather in Upchurch Auditorium.

Below, middle: Kacie Kaufman-Craig, Shelby Perry and Tkaii Gaither share a few words from All Greek Council.

Below: Sierra Denning and Jessica Evans try to comfort each other.

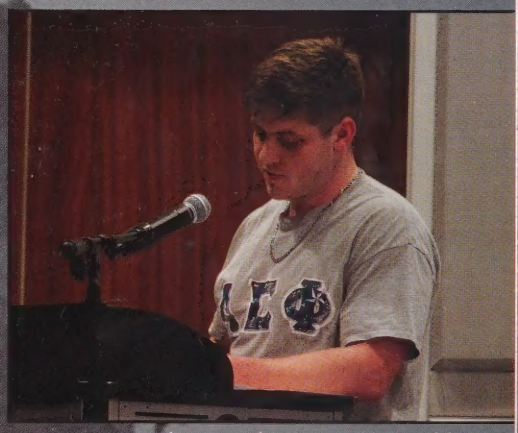






Johnny Lewis, Cameron's "little," speaks about moments they shared. Lewis brought smiles to faces in a tough time.

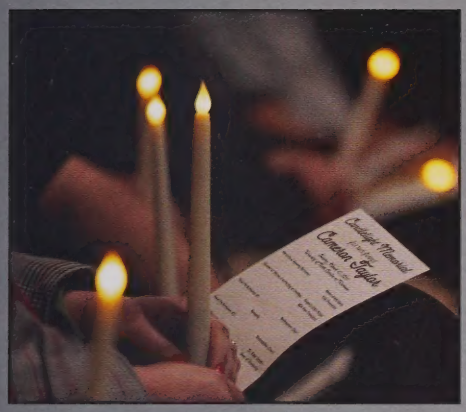
Xavier Nixon, then-president of Alpha Sigma Phi, shares his love and memories of his fraternity brother.



Former president Landen Katz eulogized his friend with examples of happy moments he and Cameron shared.

Remember

In spring of 2024, family, students, faculty, staff, and other friends gathered to honor the late UNCP student Cameron Taylor. SGA hosted a candlelight memorial to create a space for those who loved him to come together and grieve his loss. Cameron was part of the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity. He was an outstanding student in his pre-nursing undergaduate program and had the highest GPA in his fraternity. A few fraternity brothers eulogized him, including **Johnny Lewis, Xavier Nixon** and **Landen Katz.** They shared fond memories that brought smiles to the faces of those who sat in the crowd, although through the smiles many tears were shed. Landen Katz said, "Cam was more than just a brother of Alpha Sigma Phi. He was a beacon of joy, a source of laughter and a pillar of strength. His bright spirit lit up every room he entered, and his contagious smile could brighten the darkest day." Cameron was a victim of a shooting that took place at The Commons apartment complex during a large social gathering on the eve of spring break. UNCP has collaborated with the town and complexes on preventive measures since this and the shooting of Khalil Alford that we noted in last year's edition of the Indianhead. Unauthorized parties and large gatherings are prohibited and should be reported. UNCP police are now allowed to patrol off-campus. **Aspen Andersson** (right), the SGA president, also shared a few words to the friends and family present. As a student body we will forever remember the life of a fellow Brave. Through this we will also carry on Cameron's "bright spirit."



Credits

The 80th volume of the Indianhead was produced by students at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and printed by Walsworth Publishing Company in Marceline, Missouri. The account was serviced by Victoria Foley and Haeley Templeman. The faculty adviser is Dr. Jamie Litty.

This book contains 160 pages and ran 700 copies. The size-8 cover features a four-color lithograph cover with matte lamination and clear silk screen. The book is printed on 100lb legend gloss paper. The fonts used in this book include Baskerville, Bookman, Casual Hand, Calligraph Script, Feltpoint, Goudy, Helvetica, Handschrift, and Summit.

Views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, its personnel, nor its Trustees. Paid for by student activity fees, advertising and student fundraising.

Special thanks to Willis Glasgow and Michael Litty of University Communications and Marketing for some of the photography in this book that we could not do without.

Ya Had to be Here... to Get There

As the academic year nears its end and so, too, does this book, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all those who helped with the 2024-25 Indianhead. The student staff and I worked long and hard to produce this book. Some students worked the fall semester, some in spring, and some stuck around for both terms. Some served as photographers, some as writers, some as designers, and some as all three! There were occasions in the spring when we pulled "all-dayers" to get it done. It's bittersweet to say goodbye to this publication and this student organization. I have had the joy of working on the last three volumes. I want to thank Dr. Litty for pushing me to do better and supporting me as Editor-in-Chief for "Ya Had to be There."

I'm excited to finally have this book printed and tangible. The staff and I are ready to see students flipping through the pages and filling the campus with buzz of what's in it. Take a pen to the "Been There, Done That" pages, 146-147, and check off all those memories that you've made! Read the interviews with some of our campus newsmakers.

I'm proud of this volume and every one who had a part in it. That isn't just the Indianhead staff but also some of the students in Dr. Litty's feature writing class who wrote profile pieces, and other students who provided quotes and contributed photos. The yearbook staff and I are extremely grateful to those who purchased ads, as well as WingCo. of Pembroke, where we held "percentage nights." We also thank Dr. Litty's sister, Joann Barros, who made most of the greeting cards we sold at our tabling events. SGA supported our travel to the annual conference of the North Carolina College Media Association, where we received some awards!

I've spent my past year realizing that this book isn't just about the many events you should have experienced, but that anyone truly is blessed to experience UNCP in its entirety. I'm looking forward to where my UNCP education takes me in the field of public communications, knowing, as the slogan implies, "I can get there from here!"

A

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Freshman Academic Day on Aug. 19 was informative!

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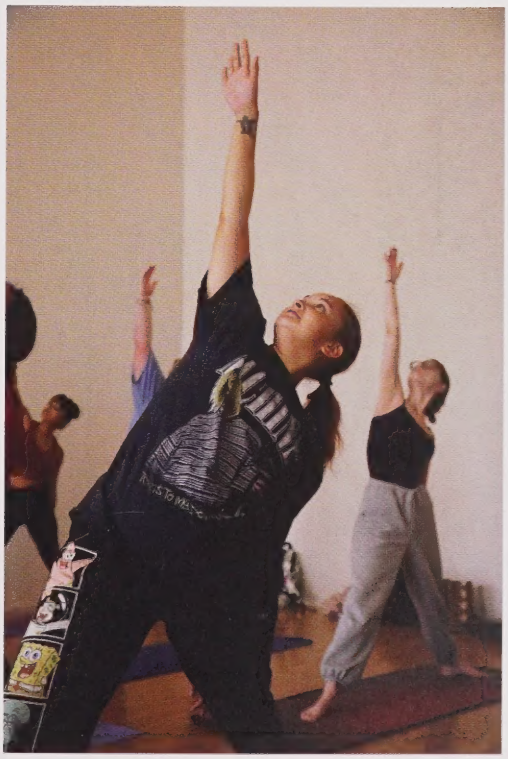

Dr. Jessica Siegele's yoga class is a P.E. credit (Kia Wynne pictured).

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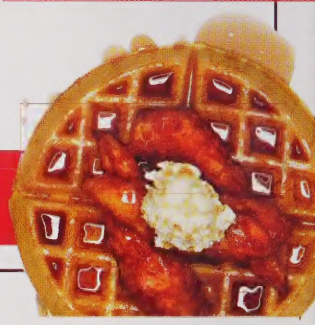

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Pony Palooza

Freshmen Move-in Day

Moonlight Madness

BraveNation Powwow

Partial Solar Eclipse

Graduation Day!

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